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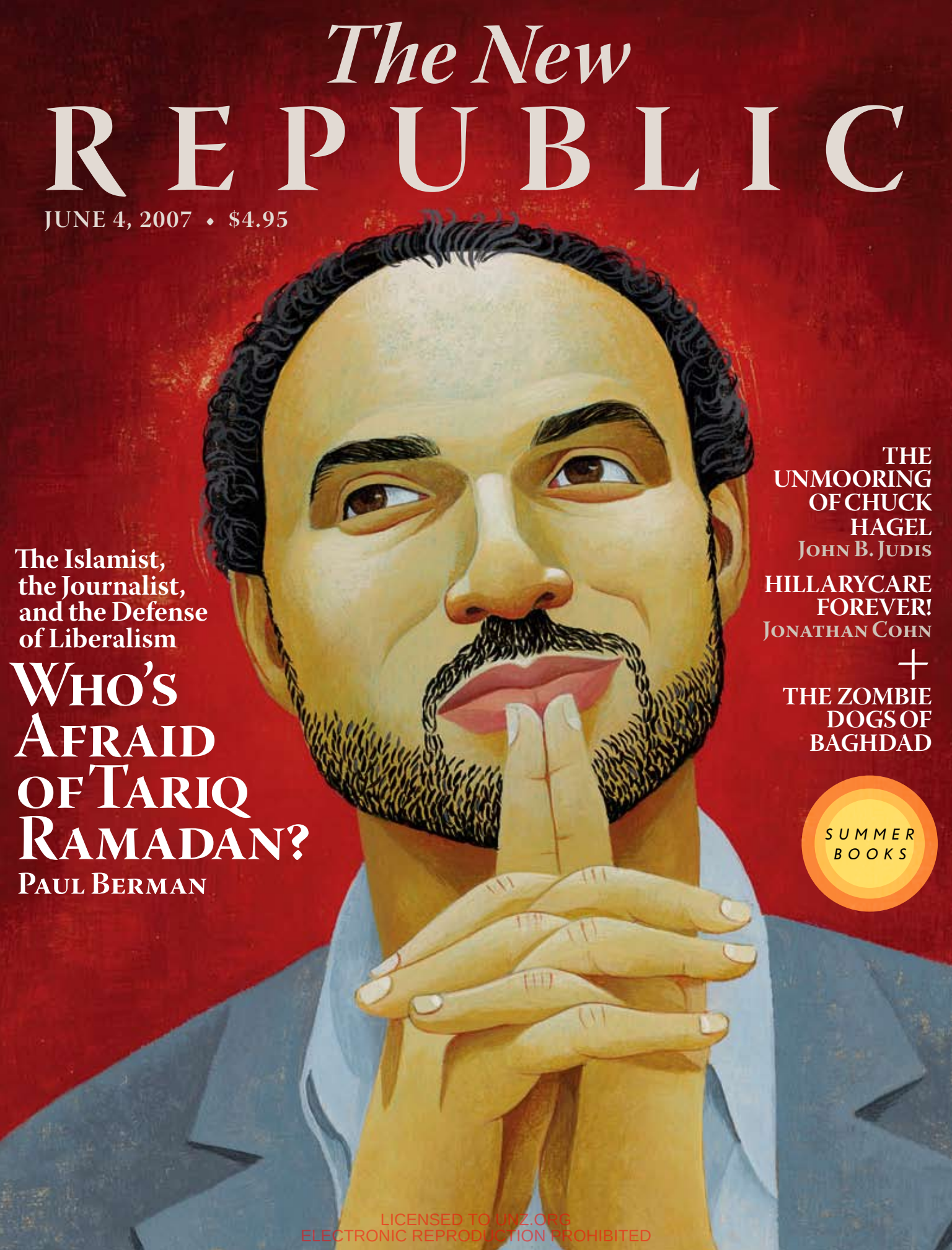

The Islamist, the Journalist, and the Defense of Liberalism

WHO'S AFRAID OF TARIQ RAMADAN?

PAUL BERMAN

THE UNMOORING OF CHUCK HAGEL

JOHN B. JUDIS

HILLARYCARE FOREVER!

JONATHAN COHN

+

THE ZOMBIE DOGS OF BAGHDAD

SUMMER BOOKS

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

VOLUME 236 WASHINGTON, JUNE 4, 2007 NUMBER 4,814

Hedge Hogs

Imagine for a moment you were a car salesman and that you drew most of your income from commissions—sell a few more minivans, get a bigger paycheck, and so on. Now imagine the IRS said you didn't have to pay full income taxes on those commissions—that you would be taxed at half the normal rate. It'd be a pretty sweet deal for you. But everybody else would complain. And rightly so: Why do car dealers deserve special treatment? Well, swap "hedge-fund managers" for "car dealers," and you've just become acquainted with the latest skirmish in what the right calls "class warfare" but the rest of us call restoring sanity to the federal tax code.

For many years now, the managers of hedge funds—large investment funds run exclusively for wealthy individuals—have taken their compensation in so-called two-and-twenty arrangements. The two refers to 2 percent of fund value, which the managers get as an annual management fee; the twenty refers to 20 percent of returns, which they take home annually as sort of a commission. These funds are enormous, and the good ones do quite well. So you might not be surprised to hear that the fund managers make some extraordinary incomes, sometimes in excess of $1 billion (yes, billion) a year.

And, hey, that's fine. This is America, and there's nothing wrong with getting rich. But we do expect all Americans, even those with the most money, to pay income tax like everybody else. And here's the surprise: These fund managers don't. Under current law, that 20 percent is considered a form of capital gains. So, even though fund managers can take the bulk of their earnings this way, they will pay taxes on it at the reduced rate for capital gains—which is 15 percent, or less than half what they would pay for other forms of income. Among those taken aback by this arrangement is Senator Max Baucus, the chairman of the Finance Committee, who has convened meetings on the subject with an eye toward closing the loophole.

The investment community has responded, predictably, by dispatching lobbyists. *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page has responded, just as predictably, by throwing a tantrum. "There's no good rationale for this," say the high priests of conservative economics, "beyond the fact that Congress wants money and private equity funds have lots of it"—which, in more sensible circles, is known as trying to finance the essential operations of government in the fairest way possible. The *Journal* also argues that reform will hamper the economy, since the current tax break "aligns" the interests of managers and investors—as if a fund manager making *only* three-quarters of a billion dollars might be tempted to screw his investors, while a fund manager making the full billion wouldn't.

Of course, the best argument for repealing this break is that it distorts the economy—in this case, by encouraging people to become fund managers rather than, say, entrepreneurs. But this is just a reminder of a larger problem: the fact that we favor capital gains in the first place. It's the wealthy who earn most of their money from investments; why should they get a tax break when people who make money by hauling concrete, answering phones, or performing surgery don't? And, quite apart from distributional justice, the break on capital gains interferes with the free market by encouraging investments that people might not otherwise undertake. Indeed, there is a whole business devoted to reclassifying normal income as capital gains to take advantage of the reduced tax rate—more proof of the artificial distinction between investment income and labor income.

You would think that conservatives, who fancy themselves guardians of the free market, might see this logic. And, while Republicans notoriously overlook this, the tax favor for hedge-fund managers is so egregious that it irks even some of their stalwarts. Senator Charles Grassley, of the Finance Committee, was actually the first to raise this issue. That's an important signal: It may actually be possible to do something about this small, though significant, flaw in the tax code, even if the much larger fight over capital gains must wait for another day.

Borderline Sanity

There are many reasons—conservative rage, labor union intransigence, Bush administration unpopularity—to believe that the immigration reform currently under consideration may die a painful death. So what will happen in its absence? You can be sure the ranks of illegal immigrants will continue to swell, adding millions more to those already living

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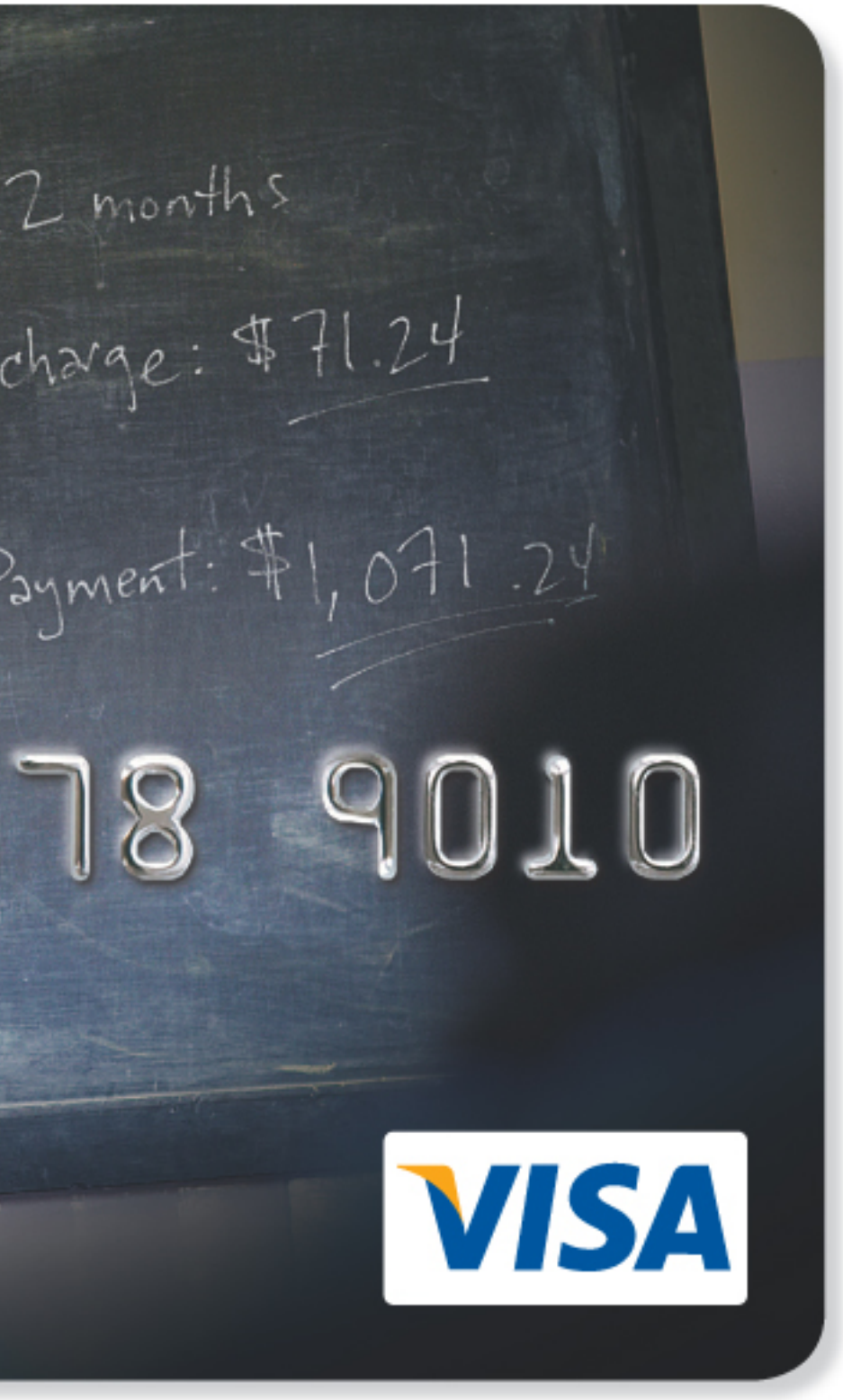

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here without the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship. And, while the impulse for compromise reforms might wane after a depressing defeat, the pressure for draconian measures will grow. Immigrants already have Bush-like levels of popularity, and those numbers will likely sink further. Eventually, anti-immigrant sentiment could lead to large-scale raids and deportations, a thriving English-only movement, and other manifestations of Know Nothing-ism—ugliness on a large scale.

Given its protean nature, it's hard to take a position on the current legislation. The details keep shifting. Will it create a new class of guest workers? Will it prevent children from reuniting with their parents? In the end, the legislation will undoubtedly include highly distasteful provisions. And, in the end, those provisions are probably worth swallowing.

Occasions for immigration reform come around about once a generation. And it's hard to imagine circumstances as congenial as the present will offer themselves again anytime soon. We have a conservative president bent on sticking reform in his empty trophy case—despite the opposition of his political base—and a Democratic Congress that basically wants to help him put it there. This dynamic won't last long. As conservative hostility to immigration grows, the chances of a successor Republican president embracing the cause of reform will diminish severely. And it's hard even to imagine a Democratic president flirting with such a third-rail issue.

The current compromise is not about fetishizing bipartisanship; it's about improving the lives of over ten million human beings who reside in our country and staving off a ferocious backlash against them. And, for all the bill's likely faults, it will provide illegal immigrants with a path to citizenship. Yes, we would prefer it if this path weren't littered with pointless obstacles. But, if this bill is rejected outright, then even that path could disappear for decades more.

Veiled Contempt

Sexism may be a fact of life in contemporary Iran, yet double standards do not always apply. As an Iranian-American journalist once observed, "[I]n cases of jailing, torture, and executions for political beliefs or on spurious charges, women and men have been treated with full equality." Those words belong to Haleh Esfandiari, and she wrote them in these pages 22 years ago. The world now knows Esfandiari as a victim—an unlucky Washington-based scholar who had the misfortune to be visiting her ill, elderly mother in Iran at a time when Tehran's rulers happened to be bent on sending a message to the West. But, before she was spirited away to Iran's infamous Evin Prison, before she was charged with seeking to overthrow the Islamic Republic, Esfandiari was a storyteller. Specifically, she used her skills as a journalist and intellectual to tell Western audiences the stories of Iranian women. Two years ago, in *Foreign Policy*, she wrote about an editor who managed to publish a feminist magazine, even as her offices were trashed and her writers imprisoned. In her 1997 collection of oral histories, *Reconstructed Lives: Women and Iran's Islamic Revolution*, she told of the small, cosmetic acts of resistance that carry so much risk for Iranian women: the physician who wore a turban that did not cover her neck; the woman who was beaten with a metal chain for allowing too much of her head to show. Her sober 1985 piece for The New Republic noted that women had played a key role in demonstrations that brought down the Shah, only to find themselves relegated to second-class status following the revolution. She explained how "courts allowed families dispensation to marry off daughters as young as ten years old" and how a "wisp of hair escaping from beneath the scarf has gotten women jailed as prostitutes."

Now that Esfandiari has herself been jailed, Western leaders must do everything in their power to secure her release. Such efforts will not necessarily be futile: In the past, Tehran has proved susceptible to outside pressure where dissidents are concerned, agreeing to release jailed reformers like Akbar Ganji and Emadeddin Baghi.

But we must not stop there. It is not just Esfandiari's plight, but the plight of all Iranian women that should be our concern. In the West, there is today lively disagreement about how best to support Iranian resisters, with some arguing for a subtle approach and others favoring an onslaught of aid and rhetorical backing. This is healthy: We can, and should, debate the proper means for aiding victims of brutal regimes. But, whatever means we choose, let us never lose sight of the ends: an Iran where human rights are respected, where political freedom is real—and where, someday, women like Haleh Esfandiari will not have to go to prison to be treated with full equality. ◆

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The Islamic philosopher Tariq Ramadan is a hero of the left in Europe, and he is increasingly admired in the United States. He has risen to prominence with his writings on Islam in contemporary culture, which argue for Islamism's compatibility with Western values. Yet the question of what he finally stands for has remained obscure. Many Western journalists have credulously accepted Ramadan's self-portrayal as a thoughtful modernizer of Islam, while failing to press him on the larger issues: religion and violence, the nature of authority in modern society, women's rights, anti-Semitism. A closer look at Ramadan's books and speeches reveals disturbing ideas and influences, and amounts to a closer look at the intellectual universe of Islamism.

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American Pie

White-collar crooks, dictatorships, and other conservative causes.

JONATHAN CHAIT

TRB
From Washington

I had thought that conservatives were taking the democratic outcome of the 2006 elections rather well, all things considered. Then I read a column by American Enterprise Institute (AEI) economist Kevin Hassett, and now I'm not so sure. Hassett points out that, over the last decade and a half, free-market dictatorships had faster economic growth than free-market democracies. The obvious explanation would be that dictatorships tend to be poorer countries (e.g., China) that can grow more quickly by catching up with modern technology. But Hassett offers up a different interpretation: Unlike democracies, dictatorships "are not hamstrung by the preferences of voters for, say, a pervasive welfare state." In other words, while Western democracies are held back by voters—with their pesky demands that citizens get health care and old people not be left to starve in the streets—autocracies march nobly toward a free-market paradise.

I suppose it's good that, in the wake of Iraq, AEI is rethinking its zealous commitment to forcibly exporting democracy across the planet. But perhaps the think tank is now veering a bit too far in the opposite direction. AEI's signature foreign policy neoconservatism was well-reflected in Karl Zinsmeister, the former editor of its magazine, who was best-known for his celebration of President Bush's foreign policy—"there is now no chance whatever of the U.S. losing this critical guerrilla war," he wrote of Iraq in 2005—and for finding innovative but not entirely ethical ways to turn the publication into a vehicle for personal profit (as detailed in James Kirchick's "The Enterprising American" in the last issue of The New Republic).

Tellingly, AEI's magazine has abandoned the Zinsmeister model and relaunched itself with a new name (*The American*) and a new mission ("a magazine of ideas for business leaders"). The new editor, James Glassman (who was TNR's publisher from 1981 to 1984), is best-known for co-authoring, with Hassett, the kitschy stock market–utopian tract *Dow 36,000*. His most recent venture was running Tech Central Station, a "think tank" owned by a lobbying firm whose clients would find their views taken up in purportedly independent op-eds written by Glassman and his minions. (This arrangement, also innovative and also not entirely ethical, was aptly dubbed "journo-lobbying" by Nicholas Confessore in a 2003 *Washington Monthly* exposé.) Mirroring the change in leadership, *The American* now seems less dewy-eyed about the virtues of democracy and far more dewy-eyed about the virtues of the bottom line. Out is the conservatism of Paul Wolfowitz. In is the conservatism of Montgomery Burns.

In addition to Hassett's odd defense of dictatorships, the current issue defends CEO pay, expresses skepticism about global warming, and denounces corporate democracy. University of Chicago economists Gary Becker (a Nobel Prize–winner) and Kevin Murphy contribute an essay titled "The Upside of Income Inequality." The upside I was expecting them to emphasize was that people with large incomes get very, very rich. But I guess that part was taken as a given. Becker and Murphy instead argue inequality has grown because "the labor market is placing a greater emphasis on education." Education makes people more productive; ergo, inequality is good.

It's true that the gap between college-educated and non-college-educated workers has grown. But the *big* rise in inequality is not between workers with degrees and workers without. It's between the top 1 percent and everybody else. Wouldn't raising taxes a bit on the top 1 percent help alleviate inequality? Becker and Murphy reply that, while a fairer tax code "may sound sensible, it is not," because it would amount to "a tax on going to college." So, if we raise the top tax rate, then 18-year-olds will choose to become convenience store clerks rather than go to college and run the small risk that they'll one day get so rich that they could face a slightly higher marginal tax rate?

But the issue's pièce de résistance is a cover story pleading for more lenient treatment of white-collar criminals. In the "good old days," author Luke Mullins reports, white-collar prisons allowed convicts to order takeout from fancy restaurants, sneak away for golf, and enjoy other trappings appropriate for men of their class. Alas, embarrassed by the "Club Fed" reputation, prison officials cracked down. Today, as Mullins's sympathetic subject tells us, white-collar prison is "a hellish place."

How hellish? I'll let Mullins pick up the description two paragraphs later: "Alongside the housing units and administrative buildings are such amenities as a gym, a softball diamond, a bocce pitch, and a tennis court slipped inside an oval track. From the grounds, inmates gaze at the soft mountaintops that rim the horizon."

OK, that might not sound very hellish. But Mullins's point is that, while such punishment might sound rather lenient to the average person, it's unbearable for men accustomed to great wealth (ill-gotten though that wealth may be). "You've been giving orders your whole life," explains one advocate of more lenient conditions, "and now there's this buffoon with an IQ of twenty telling you to clean the toilet." Actually, this part isn't quite as bad as it sounds, either; as Mullins reveals two pages later, wealthy prisoners typically hire fellow cons to do such jobs for them. But there are other indignities—they may no longer wear civilian garb and can't spend more than $290 a month at the prison commissary. *You* try limiting yourself to that budget when you're used to shopping at Barney's.

Why would *The American* develop such a strong sympathy for the suffering of white-collar criminals—especially when, like other conservative organs, it generally ignores the far greater horrors inflicted on regular prisoners? One might suspect this sudden concern was inspired by the potential wave of coming Bush administration indictments. But the real answer seems to be that *The American* sees the idea of rich criminals having an unpleasant time in prison as yet another sign of egalitarianism run amok. "As the widening gap between high- and low-income Americans has become a focus for politicians and journalists," laments Mullins, "arguments [for more lenient treatment] are unlikely to find much support."

Ah, those irrational voters, hamstringing the government again. In China, rich crooks can just buy their way out of trouble. No wonder we're falling behind. ◆

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The Crank

The surprising relevance of Ron Paul.

A STAR HAD just been born when, a day after the May 15 Republican presidential debate in South Carolina, I met Texas Representative Ron Paul for lunch on Capitol Hill. The meeting had been scheduled for several days; but, as luck would have it, the previous night Paul had gone from an oddball obscurity to a major sensation in the political world when, answering a question about September 11, he seemed to suggest that the attacks were justified by an aggressive U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. "They attack us because we've been over there. We've been bombing Iraq for ten years," Paul explained. The ever-macho Rudy Giuliani was quick to pounce. "That's an extraordinary statement," he marveled. "And I would ask the congressman to withdraw that comment and tell us that he didn't really mean that." The crowd roared its approval. A previously flagging Giuliani suddenly enjoyed his best moment of the race.

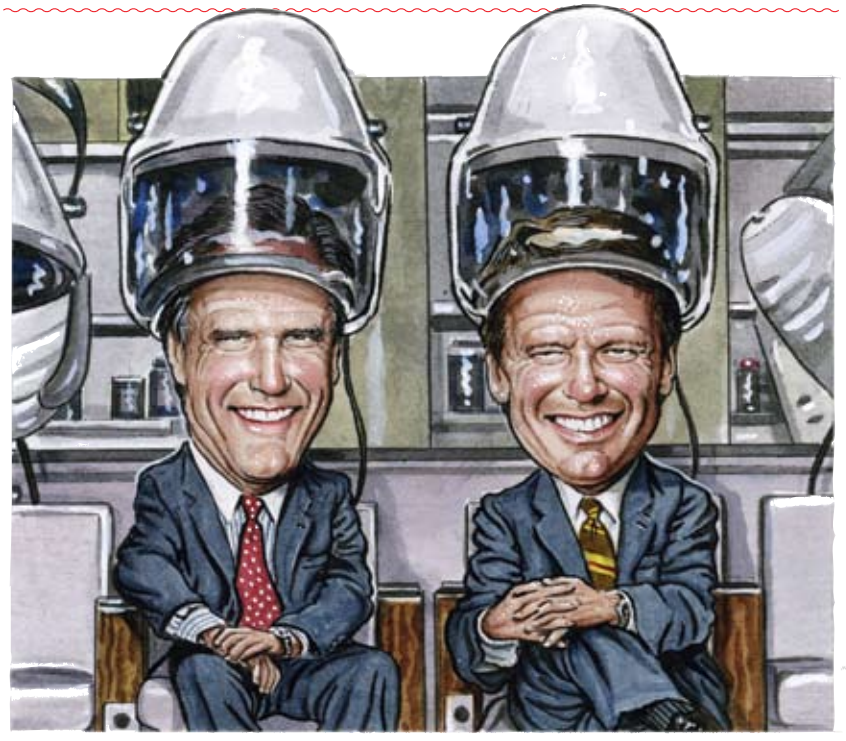
But it was also, oddly enough, Paul's best moment. The response to his comments was fast and furious: Angry Republicans, including the party chairman in Michigan, former Senate candidate Michael Steele, and unnamed South Carolina sources cited on Fox News, called for his exclusion from future debates. Sean Hannity couldn't wait to bully Paul in a post-debate interview. John McCain even added a line to his stump speech bashing him. But the outrage was instructive: Suddenly, Republicans were taking seriously a quirky 71-year-old Texas libertarian whose national support has hovered in the zero-percent range.

Nor was the attention all negative. Far from it. Paul won several instant polls on the debate, including one at the conservative Newsmax.com and a Fox News text-message poll. Incredibly, Paul's name began beating out "Paris Hilton" as the number-one query on the popular blog-searching website Technorati. (Granted, it's possible that Paul's fervent supporters are manipulating such online metrics.) The incident prompted a feisty exchange among the ladies of ABC's "The View," of all places. And, to top it off, within a day of the debate, Paul's campaign had raised $100,000—about one-sixth of his entire haul for the first three months of 2007. Paul's spokesman says the campaign headquarters has been "inundated with phone calls" ever since—80 percent of them supportive.

When Paul ambled through the door of a cheap Mexican joint on Capitol Hill last Wednesday, he hardly looked like a freshly minted celebrity. His slight frame, elfin face, and reserved persona suggest the doctor he used to be, not a politician. But Paul turned heads all the same. As he approached his table, a man seated nearby extended his hand with a broad smile and a hearty "congratulations." Paul explained that he had received a similar reception among his colleagues in the House. "I've had probably ten people come up to me and compliment me—including people I thought were war hawks," he said. "It was a tremendous boost to the campaign."

Who would have expected it? At its outset, Paul's campaign promised to be a curiosity. The nominee of the Libertarian Party in his previous run for the presidency (in 1988), Paul seemed likely to play a predictable gadfly role—using his stage time to press hoary libertarian bugaboos like the abolition of Social Security, the legalization of drugs and prostitution, and—Paul's special

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* **DREW FRIEDMAN**



Mitt Romney and John Edwards prepare for their debates.

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obsession—a return to the gold standard. Instead, thanks mainly to his adamant opposition to the Iraq war, he has assumed a far more serious role. In a Republican field that has marched in lockstep with George W. Bush on the war, Paul's libertarian isolationism has exposed an intraparty fissure over foreign policy that is far wider than has been acknowledged, encompassing not only disgruntled libertarians but some paleocons and social conservatives, as well as such GOP lions as William F. Buckley, George Will, and Bob Novak. As populist-isolationist Pat Buchanan wrote in an op-ed last week, Paul was "speaking intolerable truths. Understandably, Republicans do not want him back, telling the country how the party blundered into this misbegotten war."

Paul, for his part, thinks his view is commonsensical. "This is a very Republican position," he told me. "I just think the Republicans can't win unless they change their policy on Iraq."

Before Paul became an antiwar hero, his support consisted largely of libertarian activists—people like Michael Badnarik, the Libertarian Party's 2004 presidential nominee. Badnarik refuses to get a driver's license (even though, he conceded to me, "I have my car operational") and warns against anyone who might try to force a smallpox or anthrax vaccination on him. ("You bring the syringe, I'll bring my .45, and we'll see who makes a bigger hole.") Badnarik recounts rallying support for Paul at a recent conference of the Free State Project, a group of libertarians who have relocated to New Hampshire in the hope of concentrating their power and more or less taking over the state government. "I asked how many people would drive without a license and not pay income taxes, and three-quarters raised their hands," Badnarik recalls. "I'm choking up. I've got my heart in my throat. And I said, 'We need to do something—and Ron Paul's campaign is the shining star. We need to contribute the full two thousand dollars now. Tell all your friends.'"

Pep talks like that helped Paul to raise more than $600,000 overall in the first quarter of 2007—a pittance compared with the top candidates, but more than several better-known competitors, including former GOP governors Tommy Thompson, Mike Huckabee, and Jim Gilmore. With the help of the Free State Project, Paul actually placed second in money raised in New Hampshire, ahead of Giuliani and McCain and trailing only Mitt Romney.

But libertarians are a fractious bunch, and some hardcore activists have mixed feelings about the man now carrying their banner. For instance, libertarian purists generally support a laissez-faire government attitude toward abortion and gay marriage, as well as "open border" immigration policies and unfettered free trade. Yet Paul opposes gay marriage, believes states should outlaw abortion, decries high immigration rates, and has called himself "sort of" a protectionist. (These divergences may be explained by Paul's socially conservative East Texas district, which lies adjacent to Tom DeLay's former district and which President Bush last carried with 67 percent of the vote. Being pro-choice simply doesn't fly there.)

As a result, Paul's candidacy leaves some of his erstwhile libertarian fans cold—particularly the intellectuals who congregate in Washington outfits like the Cato Institute or *Reason* magazine. "He comes from a more right-wing populist approach," explains Brian Doherty, a California-based *Reason* editor and author of *Radicals for Capitalism*, a history of the libertarian movement. "Culturally, he strikes a lot of the more cosmopolitan libertarians as a yokel." (Doherty himself is a Paul admirer.)

And, while some libertarians criticize Paul from the left on social issues, others are swiping at him from the right over the war. "Will Libertarianism Survive Ron Paul?" asked one article on the America's Future Foundation website, before continuing, "Paul's prominence threatens to make his blame-America instincts the defining characteristic of libertarianism in the public imagination. If libertarianism becomes inextricably associated with radical pacifism, will young people with classically liberal instincts be discouraged from serious political engagement?"

Paul's provocations have roiled the waters back home as well. After the fateful debate, the largest paper in Paul's district ran a story headlined, "Some say Paul should resign." More ominously, a former longtime aide, Eric

WASHINGTON READ: IF THE SHOE FITS

"I had to deal with someone else whose casual offer to pitch in was welcomed by Kerry, the fashion designer Kenneth Cole. … Find out if he has some great ideas, Kerry said, and even if he doesn't, talk to him. Cole was a contributor to our campaign, and Mario Cuomo's son-in-law. His stream of consciousness poured in day after day, e-mail after e-mail, phone call after phone call. But were we really going to run an ad—better in print, Cole suggested—that said: "There is only one man that can Kerry us forward"? Or use the slogan: kerry. on. in '04. Nor were we going to proclaim, "All work and low pay makes every Johnny part of our middle class."… Cole cared. He was indefatigable. But by the fall, I just didn't have any more time to keep him happy."

—from No Excuses: Confessions of a Serial Campaigner, by Bob Shrum

LEFT: ALEX WONG/NEWSMAKERS/NEWSCOM; RIGHT: HUGO PHILPOTT/UPI/LANDOV

Stephen Savage

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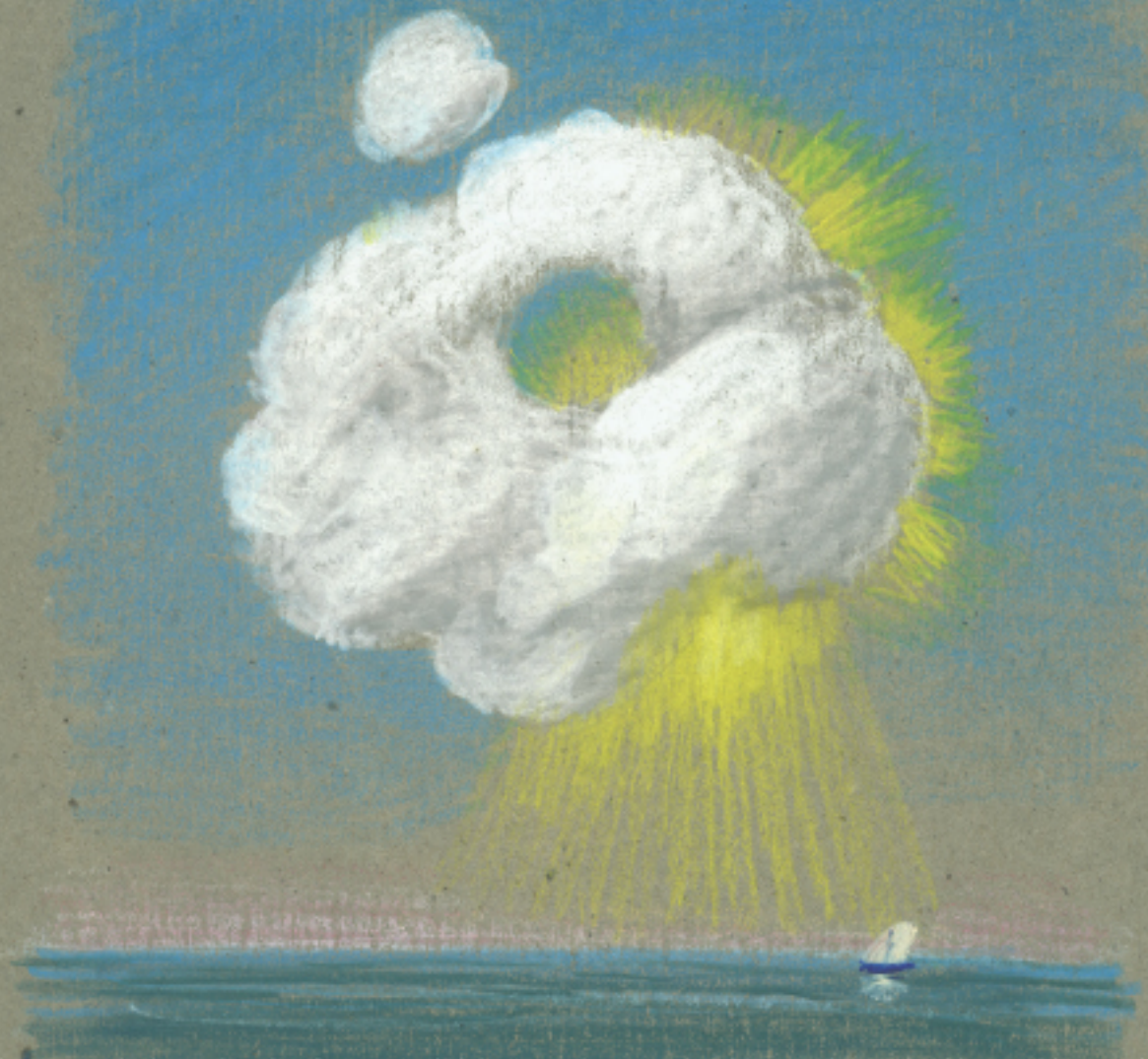
Is It Good To Be Good?



New research shows that there's a strong link between doing good and living a longer, healthier and happier life.

But in reality, why do people act in a selflessly loving way? Take Wesley Autrey, the New Yorker who risked his life on the subway tracks to save a stranger, or people risking their own lives to donate an organ. It is the love described by the Golden Rule and passed through human history by the world's great wisdom and spiritual traditions.

Since 2002, the John Templeton Foundation has supported 50 leading scientists studying the nature of selfless love including researchers at Case Western, Harvard, Iowa, Princeton, Stanford, Yale, and Wellesley.

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We are honored to be part of this pioneering research.

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Dondero, is now planning to knock his former boss out of Congress in 2008. A self-described Barry Goldwater–style "pro-military libertarian," Dondero first worked for Paul during his 1988 presidential campaign and finally left his office three years ago. He says it was bad enough begging Paul to support the 2001 congressional resolution authorizing military force in Afghanistan. But Paul's September 11 moment in the debate was the final straw. The next day, Dondero posted a blog item on RedState.com declaring his intention to unseat his one-time hero. "One of the really bad things about his piss-poor [debate] performance," Dondero told me, "is that now everyone in the country is going to think that all libertarians think the same way that he does."

Paul seems only to relish his newfound notoriety. "I enjoy dealing in the area of ideas," he told me over lunch. "And I want to make a difference." Paul also carries with him a certainty that he will be vindicated—and not just on Iraq. He is utterly convinced, for instance, that the United States is headed for an economic disaster that can only be averted by the adoption of the gold standard, a topic that has obsessed him for years. When I ask him why, at 71, he's putting himself through the ordeal of a national campaign, this—not Iraq—is the point to which he returns: "If there's an economic collapse," he says almost wistfully, "maybe I'll be in the right place at the right time." It's another slogan not suited for a bumper sticker, and another you would only hear from Ron Paul.

Michael Crowley

King David

How a pompous reporter saved the press corps.

White House correspondents like to describe their colleague NBC News's David Gregory as a "bit of a showboat." They recount, for instance, the time he ordered a Cape Cod cocktail on a press charter plane—then sent it back four times to achieve the ideal ratio of vodka to cranberry juice. Sticking with the air-travel theme, they note that his luggage tends to fill two overhead storage compartments. "He has a kind of traveling wardrobe," one reporter explains. And when, on his birthday, Gregory affixed to his backpack a bunch of balloons that read YOU'RE GREAT!, reporters joked that he had bought them for himself.

Watching Gregory joust with President Bush and his spokesmen, you can see the genesis of this punch line. When he broke into French to question Jacques Chirac at a joint presidential press conference, Bush interjected, "The guy memorizes four words, and he plays like he's intercontinental."

Nor does Gregory have any compunction about throwing a hissy fit in full view. Herewith, the locus classicus of the genre:

> WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY SCOTT MCCLELLAN: Hold on. Cameras aren't on right now. You can do this later.
> GREGORY: Don't accuse me of trying to pose to the cameras. Don't be a jerk to me personally when I'm asking you a serious question.
> MCCLELLAN: You don't have to yell.
> GREGORY: I will yell. If you want to use that podium and try to take shots at me personally, which I don't appreciate, then I will raise my voice, because that's wrong.

But, when members of the White House press corps put Gregory down—all off the record, of course—they don't mention the prime cause of their jealousy. It's not just that Gregory has been auditioning recently to fill the vacated host chair at "Imus in the Morning." During the early years of the Bush presidency, the White House press corps slumbered, allowing liars like Ari Fleischer to inveigle them into transcribing distortions about everything from weapons of mass destruction to tax cuts. But, over the last two years, without much fanfare, the White House press corps has regained its gumption, finally providing the intense journalistic scrutiny that the Bushies deserve. And it was Gregory—a real-life Stephen Colbert, but on the side of the angels—who led the revival.

"I ALWAYS KNOW where the camera is," Gregory admitted to me. And, in fact, it's a genetic predisposition. He grew up in a showbiz family, the son of a Hollywood producer, hanging out with his dad's buddies like Henry Fonda and Richard Burton. By his mid-teens, Gregory knew he wanted to be a TV reporter and was studying the Sam Donaldson oeuvre. It seems only natural that, as a child of the entertainment industry, he broke into the business covering the O.J. Simpson trial for a local affiliate.

But, if it was O.J. who launched Gregory, it was George W. Bush who made him. After stints covering the Monica Lewinsky scandal for MSNBC and as a "Dateline" correspondent, he was promoted in early 2000 to cover the then–Texas governor's presidential run. There, the six-foot-

Pablo Lobato

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Live Your Dreams

CAREER COACHING

Congressional Plaza
1601 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Paul Wolfowitz,

Thank you for choosing LYD to be your career coach and letting us share in your life and your dreams. You need to get a job—and you *can* do it. Based on our conversations, your past work experience, and our Myers-Briggs test—you're an IIDM (idealistic imaginative disorganized monomaniac)—we've come up with some exciting recommendations for a new, fulfilling stage of your career.

Mortuary director
Though a former colleague of yours recently told *The Washington Post* that you "couldn't run a two-car funeral," he or she neglected to note that many funerals require only one vehicle, and there's surely a niche for someone who can provide such a service at a competitive price. On small management triumphs rest the great.

Hollywood executive
As a purported behind-the-scenes string-puller for U.S. foreign policy and international banking, you still lack one important credential for any would-be Elder: serving as president of a motion picture studio. The advantages, in view of your C.V., are that commercial success or failure is largely random and unrelated to performance. Also, your co-workers are unlikely to have heard of you.

Bank examiner
Bank examiners specialize in monitoring banks for compliance with proper bank policies and procedures. Picture *you* being in charge of monitoring proper bank policies and procedures: It's too perfect. But we digress.

Radio host
Radio America is where the heart of patriotic broadcasting beats, and we envision a show for you: "The Wolfowitz Doctrine: Your Destination for Preemptive Talk Radio." If we make a separate deal with Sirius, you could also drop the F-bomb as you please. In fact, your recent comments in a meeting with World Bank colleagues might be incorporated into an effective daily signoff: "Thanks for listening. I'm Paul Dundes Wolfowitz. And remember: If you fuck with me or Shaha, I have enough on you to fuck you, too."

T.A. Frank

LYD Human Resources.

T.A. Frank also moonlights as a consulting editor for The Washington Monthly

five-inch reporter was bestowed with that ultimate marker of modern American journalistic accomplishment, one of Bush's terribly inventive nicknames: "Stretch." (It's hard to overstate the seriousness with which some reporters treat Bush's habit of nicknaming the journos who cover him. "You will probably, at some point, have to delve into the fact," one reporter told me in a hushed voice, "that Gregory is not the only 'Stretch' in the White House press corps"—a reference to the *Washington Examiner*'s six-foot-seven Bill Sammon.)

Gregory's first few years covering the White House were a dark period for American journalism. Bush came into office determined to change the way the White House interacted with the press, by treating the press corps not as an indispensable civic institution but rather as just another special interest. His administration deliberately marginalized national reporters by tightly controlling information and by courting smaller (and usually less skeptical) local news outlets. After the September 11 attacks, it took advantage of the president's sky-high approval ratings to encourage a climate in which efforts to challenge him were seen, for a time, as vaguely treasonous. At a 2003 panel discussion, Elisabeth Bumiller, then the White House correspondent for *The New York Times*, suggested the degree to which the press had been intimidated when she tried to explain reporters' failure to ask tough questions at a press conference on the eve of the Iraq invasion. "It's frightening to stand up there," Bumiller said. "Nobody wanted to get into an argument with the president at this very serious time."

Gregory was hardly posing searching questions during this period. But he could only suppress his inner Sam Donaldson for so long. His breaking point came in the summer of 2005, after it became clear that the White House had deceived the press about Karl Rove's role in the unmasking of Valerie Plame. At a July press briefing, he asked McClellan, "Did Karl Rove commit a crime?" The press secretary's evasive response spurred a spectacular Gregory tizzy: "You're not saying anything," he told McClellan. "[D]on't you owe the American public a fuller explanation?" Watching Gregory proclaim himself the vox populi—and in such a deep voice—it's hard not to think of Ron Burgundy. But the effect of the incident was to fatally undermine McClellan's credibility and embolden the press corps. "When David began to be more openly aggressive, it broke the pattern that existed," says Judy Keen of *USA Today*. "And that always sort of makes people wonder about their own performance."

Gregory has spent the past two years staging similarly theatrical showdowns with the administration—many of them triggered by the White House inadvertently bruising his ego. After Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shot his hunting partner on a Texas

TOMASZ WALENTA

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ranch last year, his office released the news to a local newspaper rather than to the national media. Gregory led the push-back, which culminated with him calling McClellan a "jerk." At a press conference last September, Gregory raised the concern that the administration's dismissive approach to the Geneva Conventions could make it easier for Iran or North Korea to "rough up" American prisoners. When Bush, after a typically circuitous nonanswer, tried to move on, Gregory interrupted: "But, sir, this is an important point." This prompted a petulant presidential retort: "The point I just made is the most important point." A month later, during another Bush press conference, Gregory dismissed the announcement of new benchmarks for the Iraqi government as "semantic rhetorical games, and all politics, two weeks before an election."

These incidents have predictably cemented Gregory's identity as Exhibit A in the conservative case against the liberal media. After the "jerk" outburst, he was forced to apologize publicly. The conservative group Accuracy in Media printed up postcards for supporters to sign and send to Gregory, informing him that "people who watched the briefings were astounded that a White House reporter for a major news organization would behave in such an infantile or childish manner." And an anonymous critic created the website firedavidgregory.com, which called Gregory "an embarrassment" and accused him of suffering from "Bush Derangement Syndrome."

None of which has slowed Gregory. When the Iraq Study Group released its recommendations for administration policy, Gregory asked the new press secretary, Tony Snow, "Can this report be seen as anything other than a rejection of this president's handling of the war?" Snow dismissed the question as "partisan." But, the next day, instead of encouraging conservative bloggers and pundits to turn their fire on Gregory, as the White House might once have done, Snow reversed course. He apologized from the podium for the "partisan" charge and afterward went out of his way to praise Gregory during an interview with the conservative blog *Powerline*. After years of seeing journalists cowed by White House flacks, it's nice to see those flacks a bit cowed themselves. That's why First Amendment–supporters everywhere should raise a perfectly mixed Cape Cod to David Gregory. ZACHARY ROTH

Zachary Roth is an editor of THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY.

Mine, Mine, Mine

How energy independence threatens the environment.

BACK IN JANUARY, when Nancy Pelosi formed a House committee to focus on climate change, she dubbed it the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming. The phrasing itself was noteworthy. When environmentalists talk about energy policy, they usually focus, loudly and clearly, on global warming. Many Democrats, however, prefer to frame the discussion in terms of "energy security." And who can blame them? Even people who shrug at the thought of rising temperatures agree that the country should wean itself off foreign oil. It's a hugely popular idea. And, since many of the policies that would free the United States from the clutches of OPEC would *also* curb carbon emissions, who would begrudge the Democrats this bit of clever framing?

But the strategy comes with a downside: The coal industry has lately latched on to the "energy security" craze by billing itself as the answer to our oil-dependency woes. Specifically, Big Coal is teaming up with an array of Republicans and Democrats to tout liquefied coal as a substitute for gasoline in U.S. vehicles. The country is sitting on vast coal reserves, they reason, so why not use those instead of tossing money at the House of Saud? There's just one catch: Liquefied coal would do little to reduce carbon emissions and, in all likelihood, would make things worse. Nevertheless, the idea continues to gain currency in Congress, in part because "energy security" is a sales pitch few politicians can resist.

WESLEY BEDROSIAN

THE IDEA OF using coal as a liquid fuel has been around ever since two German scientists in the 1920s discovered the process used to create it. Liquefied coal powered the Nazi military during World War II, and, in the '70s, Jimmy Carter asked Congress to look into coal-to-liquid plants as a way to counter high oil prices. (Six years and billions of dollars in subsidies later, the program was finally killed.) Recently, the Pentagon has revived the idea in a big way, with the Air Force looking to have its entire fleet capable of running on liquefied coal by 2010. No one, after all, worries more about energy security than the U.S. military, among the biggest gas-guzzling entities on the planet.

Enter the coal industry, which has fallen on hard times. Environmentalists managed to halt the construction of eight new coal plants in Texas earlier this year, while both Al Gore and NASA's James Hansen have called for a moratorium on "dirty" coal plants. Moreover, according to one MIT analysis, if Congress passes a strong emissions-reduction bill to deal with climate change, coal production could decline sharply in the coming years. As a result, investors have been increasingly wary of financing new coal-related projects.

Liquefied coal could be just the life raft Big Coal needs. In late March—to great fanfare on Capitol Hill—the industry unveiled the Coal-to-Liquids Coalition, which will push for federal subsidies for the construction of liquid-coal plants (dozens are being planned) as well as mandates for the fuel itself. The coalition's members include the National Mining Association, the United Mineworkers of America, and the AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Council—groups that carry a great deal of influence on both sides of the aisle.

Unfortunately for them, a recent analysis by the Energy Department found that coal-to-liquid fuel could generate roughly twice the carbon emissions that regular gasoline does. Coal backers counter that, if the carbon released during liquefication could be captured and permanently stored underground, the fuel

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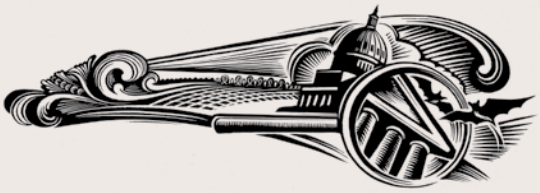
would be comparable in carbon impact to gasoline—that is, the status quo. But the technology for storing carbon underground remains unproved, and, even if it works, cost pressures may prevent it from being adopted on a large scale, since it could make plants more expensive to build and operate. No wonder, then, that recent coal-to-liquid proposals in Congress merely say that plants need to be *capable* of carbon capture rather than requiring it.

Yet, despite these problems with liquid coal, Democrats are hopping aboard. Nick Rahall, a West Virginian who heads the House Natural Resources Committee, is a major proponent of liquefied coal, calling it the key to energy independence. Another big Democratic supporter is Virginia's Rick Boucher, who chairs the energy subcommittee that will help craft global-warming legislation. (In March, the day before Gore spoke on Capitol Hill, the coal industry held a $1,000-a-head fund-raiser for Boucher.) In the Senate, Barack Obama has cosponsored the Coal-to-Liquid Fuel Promotion Act of 2007. Playing on the much-beloved energy-security theme, Obama has noted that liquefied coal is "crucial … to reduce our dependence on foreign oil." To his credit, Obama has insisted that he will only support the technology if it doesn't lead to an increase in carbon emissions, and he has pushed a rule that could make "dirty" liquid-coal plants unfeasible down the road. But that initiative is unlikely to pass any time soon. "Th is might be too far ahead of the Senate," says one staffer.

For their part, Republicans seem to have few qualms about coal. In a little-noticed shift, President Bush has started talking about mandates for "alternative" as well as "renewable" fuel to replace gasoline—a sign that he's willing to back liquefied coal. Meanwhile, Republicans on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee recently tried to amend an energy package to require that 21 billion gallons of coal-based fuel be used annually by 2022, and, while the gambit was temporarily beaten back, they may still get their way once the bill goes to the Senate floor.

Ironically, for all the hype, liquefied coal is hardly the cheapest or easiest way to achieve energy security. According to the National Coal Council, an advisory board to the Department of Energy filled with coal executives, a tremendous coal-to-liquid push—involving $211 billion in investments over the next 20 years and a 40 percent increase in mining—



On the Hill

BLOWING IN THE WIND

Th e strange cult of the Washington whistle-blower.

"Call me the dean of federal whistle-blowers," says Joe Carson, handing me his business card. Prevailing whistle blower it reads, along with his job as a Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear safety engineer. Carson, a towering man whose shoulders slope forward as if he's pushing into a gale wind, hovers above the crowd at the Warehouse Theater bar in Washington detailing his bona fides: He first blew the whistle on safety violations at Tennessee's Oak Ridge lab in 1992; since then, he has blown it seven more times, all while still employed at DOE. "Anybody want to match that record?" he barks.

Actually, there are plenty of people here at the kickoff reception for Whistleblower Week in Washington who can blow it away. It's the first whistle-blowers' convention in 15 years, and everybody who has ever told on anybody has come to town for it. Th ere are old movement patriarchs like Jeffrey Wigand, who ratted out big tobacco in the '90s (the Russell Crowe movie he inspired—*The Insider*—will play later in a small theater behind the bar) and younger stars of the Bush era like FBI whistle-blower Coleen Rowley, who hobnobs with a clutch of admirers. Th ere is a U.S. air marshal who estimates he has blown the whistle 20 or 30 times, in the beginning under the code name "Vegas," and an ob-gyn in plaid who hands everyone packets detailing his cases against several hospitals and the California Medical Board from a box he drags around on a little trolley.

Presiding over them all is a tiny, twinkly-eyed Government Accountability Project (GAP) lawyer named Tom Devine. "I think of Jesus as a whistle-blower," he muses, when asked to give a short history of whistle-blowing. "But, at this stage, with Bush's legitimacy falling apart, there are probably more whistle-blowers than at any other point in modern times."

This, the end of President Bush's reign, is the whistle-blower's moment. Squealing is sexy when your bosses are Brownie and Gonzo. House Democrats, hungry for more oversight, passed a whistle-blower protection bill in March that extends protections to government employees—the people who "knew that Iraq did not try to import uranium from Niger," as Henry Waxman put it. Whistle-blowers attending the convention were urged to lobby their senators on behalf of the now-stalled bill, and a "people's tribunal" was mounted in the Rayburn House Office Building to give whistle-blowers like Bunnatine Greenhouse (tattled on Halliburton) and Marsha Coleman-Adebayo (spilled the beans on the EPA) a chance to show legislators whistle-blowing's human face.

But, as the week goes on, it becomes clear that Whistleblower Week is more than a rally. It's a chance for people who have long been miserable lone gunmen to come together and rejoice in whistle-blowing's transformation into a full-fledged personal identity—a scene with its own specialized lawyers, therapists, 40-odd advocacy groups, a publishing imprint, swag, and even a timeless philosophy. We "believe in Kant and Mill and Aristotle," Wigand tells the whistle-blowers at the reception, "in the categorical imperative." But, the funny thing is, even all this solidarity can't make Joe Carson happy.

Two days later, at the Willard Hotel, the conventioneers further their education with such collo-

David Cowles

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quia as "The ABCs of a Successful Whistleblower Case" and "Whistleblowers and the Press." Inside the seminar rooms, sports-coach-like instructors scribble power-balance diagrams on whiteboards: In one, the whistle-blower is a tiny dot and the bureaucracy a circle around him; fat arrows of hostility shoot in from the circle toward the hapless speck. Guest speakers advise rapt audiences to keep money in mind ("sometimes, you're so worried about winning the case, you forget about damages!"), consider going anonymous ("we have Mr. Blue, we have Apples, we have P.J."), and maintain perspective ("know when it's time to move on").

This last point can be hard to learn, because whistle-blowing is addictive. "After it's over, you see people wandering, desiring that level of involvement," explains Jim Holzrichter, a soft-spoken former auditor whose epic struggle with Northrop Grumman put his family in a homeless shelter for months. Down the hall from the seminar rooms, in a prim beige-and-cinnamon lounge, Veterans Affairs Whistleblowers Coalition head Jeffrey Fudin perches patiently on a couch, waiting for his V.A. colleagues to come help put the finishing touches on their presentation. Fudin started blowing the whistle back in 1993, when he suspected that the Albany V.A. hospital where he worked was illegally experimenting on cancer patients. Most recently, he blew it in 2004, when the hospital refused him time off to give a lecture on, natch, whistle-blowing. "To you, it might not seem a big deal," he allows, smiling gently. "But, to me, it was just another twist of the knife."

Since that episode, though, times have been flush for V.A. Whistleblowers. After the Walter Reed scandal broke, Fudin started receiving several new membership inquiries every week. A national security whistle-blowers' group has had to turn away applicants, and staffers visiting Whistleblower Week's events exhibit special interest in people from the Department of Justice. This end of loneliness and newfound sense of community is the convention's grand theme, and the lower-profile whistle-blowers, along with the stars, emit the grateful sense of being inducted into a fellowship. "I was like, 'Oh, my God, they're me, and I'm them,'" gushes a Tennessee nurse.

But, after the seminars are done, when a handful of whistle-blowers retire to sip chardonnay at a Marriott hotel restaurant nearby, some tensions begin to peek through. Talk turns to the omnipresent plaid-coated doctor. "I'm not sure his whistle-blowing was all that important," someone whispers.

At the beginning of the week, I was skeptical of the proposition that whistle-blowing is a personality type you are born with. But it never seemed more true than at the end of Whistleblower Week, during a $150-a-head wrap-up retreat to help whistle-blowers de-stress. Seated with the whistle-blowers in a darkened room, retreat leader Don Soeken—a psychotherapist who runs a mountain sanctuary for whistle-blowers in West Virginia—encouraged them to contemplate a healing career change. But conversation soon circled back to the whistle-blowing life, as one Naval whistle-blower recounted the story of a cryptographer whose valiant work at Pearl Harbor the Navy had rewarded with bitter demotions. "Oh—oh," an ex–Army Corps of Engineers manager cried out, as though the long-dead cryptographer's humiliation was her own. Later, Soeken showed a relaxation video, because "it's hard for whistle-blowers not to make noise," he explained. "It's like a group of unruly children." During the film, one whistle-blower threw spitballs.

Above all, "whistle-blower" is a personality type that thinks in absolutes. Isolated from professional peers, they long for a cozy community of like-minded souls, but they also instinctively distrust such coziness. That might explain what made all that whistle-blower fellowship less than satisfactory for Joe Carson. While he showed up to almost every Whistleblower Week event, all the while he was plotting. His targets were the whistle-blowing advocates themselves, whom he alleged turn a blind eye to dysfunctional government oversight because it feeds their business model. "GAP, Tom Devine—they exploit a lot of these people that need rescuers," says Carson.

The accusation does not go unanswered. "It makes me a little resentful," Devine says, adding that he no longer intends to spend time with Carson or represent him for free.

But Carson knows how to take his complaint to the next level. "We're on a crusade to embarrass and enlighten GAP," says a whistle-blower friend, detailing their plan to expose the group to its donors. After all, if you believe anything of Kant or Mill or Aristotle, you have a mandate to expose fraud unconditionally. Even if that means blowing the whistle on the whistle-blowers.

Eve Fairbanks

would allow the United States to replace just 10 percent of its oil supply. By contrast, using that coal to generate electricity for plug-in hybrids would displace twice the oil and emit a fraction of the carbon.

Still, the Coal-to-Liquids Coalition insists that liquid coal is "among the most practical, promising answers to greater energy security." And, so long as official Washington continues to treat this dubious assertion as fact, Democrats who prefer to talk about energy independence first and global warming second will be playing right into Big Coal's hands.

Bradford Plumer

Dead of Night

The zombie dogs of Baghdad.

In the last hour of any patrol in Baghdad, things start to slow down. Conversations are filled with comfortable silences that stretch themselves out. Everyone gets a little bit restless to head back to beds, food, and relative safety. No one wants anything to happen that would keep us out longer than necessary.

That's why I could feel the exasperation in the Humvee when the call went out over the radio one night last December for everyone to stop. The senior non-commissioned officer in my vehicle called up over the radio network and asked what the holdup was. A pause followed. The lead vehicle said there were dogs, a lot of them, fighting over something.

This didn't seem like a reason to stop. If you patrol Baghdad at night, you end up sharing the streets with dogs. Thousands of them roam the darkened city, some mangy, others well-groomed, promenading through piles of garbage and bricks. Sometimes, when they're alone, they pass by nearly undetectable except for the quiet scraping of their unclipped claws along the alleyways and the strange iridescent glow of their eyes. More often, they congregate in giant packs. They fight and howl and bark, and they are louder than the people who inhabit the city during the daytime. But we had never had a reason to stop for them before. "Jesus Christ," said Specialist Hernandez, a passenger in our Humvee. "I thought we were supposed to be keeping Iraqis from fighting each other, not dogs."

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TOMASZ WALENTA

Before anyone could respond, the lead vehicle came back up over the net. The dogs were eating a human body. More precisely, they were eating *out* of a human body. Apparently, they were only eating the brain.

This wasn't the first dead body I had seen in Baghdad. Religious factions, and factions within factions, kill one another on a daily basis. It's less often, maybe only a few times a month, that we find the dumped bodies. The point of dumping a body is to send a message. The killers want as many people as possible in the neighborhood to be exposed to it.

A mob of dusty kids who were shouting excitedly, running around corners, and pointing led us to our first body at the beginning of my deployment. Eventually they stopped and circled around a man hog-tied and stiff on the side of the road. There weren't any large pools of blood, so we knew that he had been killed somewhere else and dropped in this particular neighborhood for some particular reason. His eyes had been gouged out, and there were minor lacerations on his arms and face. He had been kidnapped, tortured, and executed.

For most of us, it was the first dead human we had seen outside of a funeral parlor, so we momentarily froze with some strange mixture of revulsion and reverence. The kids had already scattered or were asking for chocolate, their parents smoking butts in doorways, sending us tired and helpless glances.

The patrol leader didn't want too many boots on the ground just to recover a body, so only four of us got out of the Humvee. We stopped our vehicle about 15 meters from the pack of dogs. "Should we shoot them?" Hernandez asked the patrol leader.

"Nah, I think they're just starving," he answered.

Almost within arm's reach of the body, two of the more deranged, wild-looking dogs were still pursing back their lips to scoop up brain tissue with their fangs. Hernandez kicked the nearest one in its protruding ribs. The dog didn't make a sound—it just rolled off into the darkness.

Having scattered the dogs, we all looked at the dead body in front of us, pretending to think of a way to move it. The man was lying on his back. His hands and feet were free, but the top of his head had been blown away. Maybe it was a failed kidnapping. He was a big guy, maybe six feet tall and a little on the obese side. He could've struggled, and, instead of a routine execution, they had to shoot him in the head in a really quick and sloppy way. But why had the body stayed here this long without being reported? The locals usually either wave down an American patrol, call the tip hotline, or at least tell the police.

Someone reached down and picked a shell casing up off the ground. It was 9mm with a square back. Everything suddenly became clear. The only shell casings that look like that belong to Glocks. And the only people who use Glocks are the Iraqi police.

"How close is the nearest IP station?" I asked.

"It's actually on this street, about five hundred meters south. We would be able to see it without optics if it were daylight," the patrol leader said.

"Are we gonna drop the body off?" Hernandez asked.

"Nah, they can clean up after themselves. We'll swing by and tell them to pick up the body."

As we slowly started moving back toward the Humvee, we could hear the dogs filling in the space behind us. I turned around and saw their green eyes flashing in the deep shadow where we'd left the body. Part of me thought we should have shot the dogs or done something to keep them from eating the body, but what good would it have done? We only would have been exposing ourselves to danger longer than we needed to.

Back in the Humvee, Hernandez started talking to me without looking in my direction. "Man, I've never seen anything like that before," he said.

"What? A guy killed by a cop?" I asked.

"No, man, zombie dogs. That shit was wild," he said, laughing.

Something inside of me fought for expression and then died. He was right. What else was there to do now but laugh?

"I took his driver's license," I said.

"You did?" questioned Hernandez.

"Yeah. It said he was an organ donor."

We chuckled in the dark for a moment, and then looked out the window into the night. We didn't talk again until we were back at our base. *Scott Thomas*

Scott Thomas is a pseudonym for a freelance writer and soldier currently serving in Baghdad.

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Look Back in Anger

The unmooring of Chuck Hagel.

JOHN B. JUDIS

What distinguishes the politician from the political agitator is a lively concern for his own job security. Politicians sometimes say what they believe, but they don't usually say things that might jeopardize their political future. Until recently, Chuck Hagel was a consummate politician, and a successful one at that. He defeated a popular sitting governor in his first Senate race in 1996 and won reelection, in 2002, with 83 percent of the vote. While he occasionally strayed from the GOP fold on foreign policy—an ardent internationalist, he had criticized both the Iraq war and neoconservatism generally—his credentials as a loyal Republican were never in doubt. He has long been a predictable vote on issues of importance to the American Conservative Union, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Christian right. And he remains so. It's not well-known, but Kyoto foe Hagel is still skeptical that humans are triggering global warming. "We always had climate change," he told me during a recent interview. "The issue is what is causing this. We still do not know."

By 2004, Hagel was preparing to run for president in 2008. He assembled a kitchen cabinet of advisers and a wider group of friends who were committed to fund-raising for him. His PAC gave money to the Iowa Republican Party. He planned to run on his conservative credentials—he boasted that, in 2006, he had voted with the White House more frequently than any other senator—while remaining critical of the Iraq war. Hagel isn't a household name, and, in a field dominated by John McCain and Rudy Giuliani, the Nebraska senator certainly faced an uphill struggle. Still, there was reason to believe that Republican voters would at least give him a hearing.

Then, quite suddenly this year, Hagel began saying and doing things that no rational Republican who was running for president would say or do. In an *Esquire* article and later in a nationally televised interview with George Stephanopoulos, Hagel raised the specter of *impeaching* George W. Bush. The president is "not accountable anymore," Hagel told *Esquire*, adding, "You can impeach him, and before this is over, you might see calls for his impeachment." In March, he went a step further. Despite his misgivings about the war, Hagel had voted with the White House at key junctures, including the October 2002 resolution authorizing force and the committee vote to confirm John Bolton as U.N. ambassador. But, on March 27, he provided the swing vote to pass a Democratic measure on Iraq. The resolution, virtually the same as one that Hagel had opposed only twelve days before, set a March 2008 goal for the withdrawal of U.S. troops. On the Senate floor, Hagel ripped the administration for "escalating our military involvement in Iraq."

Republican voters might have put up with, even applauded, Hagel's criticism of how Bush was conducting the war; but they are unlikely to accept his decision to join Democrats on a crucial partisan vote and even less likely to accept his speculation about impeaching Bush. Indeed, in the wake of the Senate vote, Hagel's longtime patron and mentor, former Nebraska Representative John McCollister, implicitly rebuked Hagel in a letter to the *Omaha World-Herald*, writing, "I believe that some people disregard the awful consequences of a premature withdrawal and want to end the war, period. Others have a consuming, burning hatred of George W. Bush as their dominant legislative priority. Those who carelessly throw out talk of 'impeachment' are of the same stripe." Meanwhile, Nebraska Attorney General Jon Bruning announced that he was considering challenging Hagel in the Republican primary if he seeks reelection to the Senate. "Senator Hagel has lost touch as a Republican," says Bruning, "and he has not behaved as one."

Having become an outcast in his own party, Hagel is now hinting that he may leave the GOP altogether and run for president as an independent—never mind the astronomically long odds that would accompany such a bid. "I think a credible third ticket, third party, would be good for the system," Hagel declared recently on "Face the Nation." Asked whether he might run on an independent presidential ticket with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the usually poker-faced Hagel broke into a wide grin. "It's a great country to think about a New York boy and a Nebraska boy to be teamed up leading this nation," he said. One member of Hagel's kitchen cabinet says, "It is never going to happen." But the fact that Hagel even raised the possibility shows how far he has traveled politically.

In short, Hagel—having spent his career building a reputation for steady, loyal conservatism—has stopped acting like a politician and begun acting like an agitator or crusader, a man with a cause that overrides any political calculation; and, in doing so, he has probably ruined whatever shot he once had at becoming president. Why did he do it? Tightly wound and stocky, with steely blue-gray eyes, Hagel is known for what a former staffer calls his "huge temper." And there is no doubt that, today, Chuck Hagel is acting out of anger. Anger about Iraq, yes, but also anger fueled by things that happened many decades ago. Anger that he had suppressed for a long time.

According to his two younger brothers, Chuck Hagel takes after his grandfather, who managed a lumber mill in Ainsworth, Nebraska. Their grandfather, recalls Chuck's brother Tom, "was your stereotypical dominant Teutonic male—very, very German, very dominating, very hard-driving. He set the rules: his way or no way. And my father was kind of like that. But Chuck was more like that."

Their father at one point worked for the same mill, but he was an alcoholic and had difficulty holding a job. When Chuck was growing up, his family moved from one small town to another as his father got jobs working for lumber mills. His father's fondest memories were of his service in the Pacific in World War II. "We were a family that grew up with the Legionnaires' Cap and a sense of responsibility to the country," Hagel recalls. Much of his father's hope for the future rested on Chuck, who was a star football player in high school. But he died in 1962, when his eldest son was 16, and Chuck's football career ended when he injured his neck in December of his freshman year of college. With his athletic career over, Hagel floundered in

Brooks Kraft

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school. In 1967, on the verge of being drafted, he enlisted in the Army.

Hagel was eager to go to war. Trained as a rifleman, he volunteered to go directly to Vietnam rather than spend six months in West Germany. In Vietnam, he was joined after three months by Tom, who, to his amazement, was sent to the same unit. They fought together in the jungle and Saigon during the Tet offensive. At different moments, each had to save the other's life. The last time came in the spring of 1968, when a mine went off under their armored personnel carrier outside Saigon. As Chuck later told a newspaper reporter, when he grabbed Tom, who had been knocked unconscious, he was "dead weight, blood pouring out of his ears." Before he could pull Tom out, the ammunition in the carrier blew up, severely burning Chuck and blowing out both his eardrums.

Soon afterward, the brothers were sent back to the States, but they arrived home with very different reactions to their war experiences. Tom was tortured by guilt over the people he had killed and seen killed. He believed that the war had been a waste and was immoral. "To the day I die, I will be ashamed I fought in this war," he wrote to their younger brother Mike, who couldn't serve because of a bad knee. When he came home, he drank heavily. After a year, he entered college and eventually became a law professor at the University of Dayton. Today, Tom—bearded, taller and thinner than his brother, his eyes betraying sadness rather than anger—considers himself a liberal Democrat.

Chuck, by contrast, remained convinced that he had done his patriotic duty by fighting. "Chuck believed it was right for us to be there, that we were defending freedom," Mike Hagel recalls. The future senator later told Myra MacPherson for her 1984 book about Vietnam vets, *Long Time Passing*, that he believed "If America was involved, then it's right." Unlike his brother, Chuck did not go on a bender when he came home; but he also didn't return to the life he had led before going to war. He went back to college at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. After living for six months with Tom near campus, he rented a house in the country. He went to classes but kept to himself for a year. "It was the strangest thing, so out of character for someone like me," he told MacPherson. "Then I woke up one morning and said, 'OK, enough of this. It's time to get back into society.'" In many ways, he simply put the war behind him—or so he believed. "I went about trying to get my life in order and not reaching back into what happened," he told MacPherson. "I don't have these same problems that Tom has about guilt and these emotional feelings."

But Tom told a different story about his older brother. "I've seen him break down," he explained to MacPherson. "I *know* we share some nightmares. He has just suppressed them so deeply. But he's going to have to walk through the valley sometime."

Chuck Hagel may not have dwelled on his own experiences in the war, but, like Colin Powell, his view of the world would come to bear the imprint of Vietnam. After graduating from college in 1971, Hagel went to Washington, where he got a job on McCollister's staff. When Reagan took office in 1981, Hagel was appointed deputy director of the Veterans Administration. He followed that job with a brief, but spectacularly successful, career as a cell phone promoter. Then, in 1986, Hagel took over the United Service Organization (USO) and revived it. When he was elected to the Senate in 1996, he surprised his colleagues by making the Foreign Relations Committee, which had become a backwater under North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms, his first choice.

Hagel's worldview was almost entirely self-taught—in speeches, he still mispronounces George Kennan's last name "Keenan"—but it was not the worldview of a typical Nebraskan. The state had been a center of isolationist sentiment before each world war. Its farmers were interested in foreign trade but not really in foreign policy. Yet Hagel was a committed internationalist who looked upon the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and NATO as essential ingredients of U.S. foreign policy. "Borderless challenges will require borderless solutions," he declared in his first major foreign policy address in September 1998. But his internationalism was tempered by realism about what the United States could accomplish overseas. He was wary of attempts to use American power to create democracy. Like former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, who would become a friend and adviser, Hagel thought the United States should seek stability, security, and prosperity. He later called his outlook "principled realism."

Like Powell, Hagel was hesitant to throw American soldiers into combat unless it was absolutely necessary, and he blanched at politicians who advocated going to war but had no personal experience of it. After a rancorous debate over foreign policy with a Republican primary opponent in 1996, Hagel said to an aide, "He has no idea what it is like to have his face down in the mud and having bullets flying over his head."

During his first term, Hagel applied his "principled realism" to U.S. policy toward Saddam Hussein. He voted for the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, which committed the United States to removing Saddam and promoting a "democratic government" in Iraq, but he expressed reservations about its intent to fellow Nebraskan Bob Kerrey, a sponsor of the bill. "He was very skeptical about the desirability of democracy being established," Kerrey recalls.

Hagel was even more skeptical about using military force to oust Saddam. "With the current tensions in this region and the grim prospects for peace in the Middle East, this area of the world could erupt like a tinderbox," Hagel said in a floor speech that February. When McCain advocated air strikes against Iraq's Republican Guard, Hagel cautioned that "the military option alone will not work," and he warned against the "trap of doing something, anything, just because we said we would and the world expects us to."

Hagel first began to have misgivings about the Bush administration's foreign policy after the president's 2002 State of the Union address, in which Bush used the term "axis of evil" to describe Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. When Powell came before the Foreign Relations Committee the following month, Hagel chided him about the speech. "Actions and words have consequences that are very dangerous at a time in the history of man when there's little margin of error left," he said. That August, after Dick Cheney had made the case for invading Iraq in a speech before the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Nashville, Hagel recoiled. He warned against attempts "to scare the American public by saying this guy is a couple of months away from not only possessing nuclear weapons, but a ballistic missile to deliver those." A few days earlier, he had told *Newsweek*, "It's interesting to me that many of those who want to rush the country into war and think it would be so quick and easy don't know anything about war. They come at it from an intellectual perspective versus having sat in jungles or foxholes and watched their friends get their heads blown off. I try to speak for those ghosts of the past a little bit."

Hagel voted for the resolution authorizing the administration to use force against Iraq—but he did so, he said, on the basis of assurances from Powell and

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Dr. Dennis Dalton, (Ph.D., University of London) is the Ann Whitney Olin Professor of Political Science at Barnard College, Columbia University. Professor Dalton has been honored with several scholarships and grants including two Fulbright Scholarships.

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Bush that the United States would pursue a diplomatic strategy first. Hagel's speech in favor of the resolution could easily have been given by an opponent of the war. "To succeed, our commitment must extend beyond the day after to the months and years after Saddam is gone," he said. "The American people must be told of this long-term commitment, risk, and costs of this undertaking. We should not be seduced by the expectations of 'dancing in the streets' after Saddam's regime has fallen." As it became clear to Hagel in the winter of 2003 that the administration was bent on going to war regardless of what U.N. inspectors found, his criticisms of the administration grew harsher. In December, Hagel co-authored a *Washington Post* op-ed with Joe Biden. They wrote, "Going it alone and imposing a U.S.-led military government instead of a multinational civilian administration could turn us from liberators into occupiers, fueling resentment throughout the Arab world." At the University of Notre Dame the following month, Hagel said he did not "see democracy taking quick root in Iraq and spreading throughout the Arab world."

Following the invasion, Hagel alternately criticized and expressed confidence in the administration's conduct of the war. He joined McCain, Biden, and Senator Jack Reed—a Democrat and former Army captain who is Hagel's closest friend in the Senate—in urging Bush to send more troops to pacify the country. In September 2004, he worried that "we're in deep trouble in Iraq," and, in November, he complained, "I don't think we have enough troops. We didn't have enough going in." But then, in December, he expressed optimism that the elections the Bush administration planned for Iraq would bring "peace and security in the Middle East." He was a critic, but not yet a heretic.

Sometime in 2006, Hagel's outlook darkened. Partly, that was because of what he saw happening on the ground in Iraq. But, partly, it was because he was once again thinking about a subject he had long repressed: Vietnam.

Hagel had begun revisiting his experience in Vietnam years earlier. In 1999, Nebraska public television aired a documentary, "Echoes of War," based on Chuck and Tom Hagel's visit to Vietnam to open the new U.S. consulate in Saigon. He also became a regular speaker at Vietnam memorial events. Hagel himself says that his interest in Vietnam was reignited sometime in 1999, when he listened to a tape of Lyndon Johnson's conversation with Senator Richard Russell about the war. On that tape, when Russell advises Johnson to pull out of Vietnam, Johnson agrees that U.S. intervention could end in disaster but expresses fear that, if he does withdraw, he will be impeached.

Hagel probably did begin reading about Vietnam in 1999, when he and his brother visited the country, but the opinions he expressed during that visit and over the next two years were no different from those he had expressed 20 years before. While critical of the way the war was prosecuted, Hagel claimed that it had ultimately proved beneficial. "If the United States had not made a stand in Vietnam, … the face of Southeast Asia would look very different from what it does today," he said during his 1999 visit. Two years later, speaking at the Vietnam Memorial, he made exactly the same point.

Tom Hagel says his brother's reevaluation of Vietnam began in earnest a few years later. "It was the run-up to the invasion of Iraq where you [began to] see all of this just flood out," he says. "Since that time, standing back, watching and talking to him, there were at least a few times a year, it was like watching someone growing increasingly obsessed and frustrated with what he sees going on around him and feels powerless to change it." According to Tom, during "the last year or two," as Chuck read more about the history of the war, his views on Vietnam changed dramatically. "I have never seen him change an opinion on anything in my life so quickly as he did after this information," Tom says. "It shocked me when he told me about it."

The first public inkling of Hagel's changed outlook would come in a profile of him in November 2004 by *Washington Post* reporter Robert Kaiser. Hagel described the learning process he was going through. "I read everything I could about Indochina, about the war, about the French, about Vietnam, about our policy, what got us there. … And the more I read, the more I understood. … I got a sense that there was just so much dishonesty in it. And it was chewing these kids up. … So I started connecting all the deaths and all the suffering and the chaos and wounds. I started to sense a dishonesty about it all." Hagel now saw the war in Vietnam, like the war in Iraq, as a war of choice—one that had been built on an edifice of lies.

Chuck and Tom Hagel fought together in Vietnam (above), an experience that now haunts Chuck as a senator (below).

Hagel began to believe that the United States had gone to war in Vietnam and had continued fighting partly for narrow political reasons—to avoid being impeached, in Johnson's case, or to avoid being "the first American president to lose a war," in Richard Nixon's words. He and his brother had been "used" for ignoble ends. That's what Tom Hagel had been saying all along. Says Mike Hagel, "Chuck totally agrees with Tom now."

Sometime in the last year, Hagel began to apply these conclusions to Iraq. Two things spurred him to do so. First, dur-

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ing several trips to the Middle East with Reed, he came to believe that the United States was throwing soldiers into the midst of another nation's civil war. "Chuck and I had the realization that this was a profoundly political and not a military problem," Reed says. "The Iraqis have to resolve this civil war and conflict."

Second, Bush's response last December to the Baker-Hamilton report greatly disturbed Hagel. He had enthusiastically backed the commission's recommendation to "engage directly with Iran and Syria" and to move "combat forces out of Iraq responsibly." He expected that the administration would accept the report's recommendations; and, when Bush ignored them and opted instead to send more troops to Iraq, Hagel had a sense of déjà vu. When I asked him if Bush's surge had brought the comparison with Vietnam into focus, he said that was "exactly right." The arguments Bush is using to justify his "escalation," Hagel told me—he refuses to use the word "surge"—"are the same arguments we used in Vietnam."

Hagel was struck, he said, by "the dishonesty of both wars." And he sees the soldiers as victims of this dishonesty. Tom Hagel thinks it is this realization above all that is driving his brother's anger. "He knows what these people are getting into that we send over there," Tom says. "And he is so incredibly frustrated that he can't convince his colleagues that this is so important, this is so vital, this is so real that you've got to listen to me and follow my suggestions."

It was this frustration, Tom believes, that was "driving him to run for president." But the same frustration was also leading his brother to make statements and cast votes that undermined his chances of ever making it to the White House.

Hagel will not be pleased with this portrait of his political evolution on Iraq and Vietnam. As I learned when I interviewed him, he is not given to introspection and gets annoyed at questions that have a psychological dimension. But it is precisely Hagel's determined resistance to introspection that lends the story of his evolution poignancy and credibility. He is a man who decided, as he told his biographer Charlyne Berens, to take "the American Legion path" when he came home from Vietnam—and did so for many decades. It was only when faced with the onset of a new war—one that he saw "chewing" up a generation like his own—that he was forced to reconsider his past.

Hagel's fury over Iraq has unsettled his political life. He has been at odds with the White House for at least five years, but he has now alienated some of his Republican colleagues in the Senate. Even his friendship with McCain, who was once his mentor, appears to be on the rocks. In early February, Hagel called a McCain resolution on the Iraq war "intellectually dishonest." When a reporter from *GQ* asked Hagel this winter how serving in Vietnam had affected his decisions on Iraq, he drew a cruel contrast between his service and McCain's: "When I got to Vietnam, I was a rifleman. I was a private, about as low as you can get. So my frame of reference is very much geared toward the guy at the bottom who's doing the fighting and dying. … John McCain served his country differently—he spent five years as a prisoner of war. … I don't think my experience makes me any better, but it does make me very sober about committing our nation to war." In March, after Hagel had voted for the Democratic resolution on withdrawal from Iraq, McCain fired back. "My views are not framed by events that happened thirty years ago," he said. "I don't think it would be fair to my constituents, intellectually, to have my views formed only by that one experience of my life. That's maybe where Chuck and I have some differences." McCain's comments were as cruel as Hagel's. And they were also hypocritical, given that McCain invariably uses his own experience as a prisoner of war to attract support for his current stance.

In Washington, Hagel is reviled by neoconservatives. "I think the appeasers ought to have a candidate in the Republican primaries, and he's their ideal standard-bearer," wrote Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute. At the same time, he is cheered by conservative war critics like Grover Norquist and Robert Novak and by center-left foreign policy experts. Former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski says of Hagel, "I like the guy, and I admire his views. We see eye-to-eye on the majority of issues. I won't say we see eye-to-eye on every issue, but if you ask what we don't agree on, I wouldn't be able to answer."

Last winter, I heard from people close to Hagel that he was preparing to announce an exploratory committee to run for president. That would have allowed him to raise money for a presidential campaign without yet committing himself to the race. And, when his office sent out "urgent" e-mails in large type announcing that he would give a press conference in Omaha on March 12, I expected, as did most other members of the media, that he was about to announce the committee's formation. But Hagel, with the Nebraska governor and McCollister seated in the front row, and with CNN and MSNBC carrying the event live, surprised the press by postponing any announcement. It was a bizarre performance by a politician who, in the past, had been very sure-footed and decisive. Pundits termed it Hagel's "March madness."

Hagel claimed that he wasn't ready because he still wanted to devote himself to Senate business; but, according to his advisers, he had become plagued by political uncertainty. He wanted to see if McCain's campaign continued to flounder, and he also wanted to see if he could raise enough money to run. At the time, he still insisted that he had a chance to win over Republican voters. "If I didn't think that, I wouldn't have interest in any of this business," he told me at the end of March.

Two months later, Hagel appears to have concluded that he has little chance as a Republican. When I asked him whether anything in particular had convinced him to consider running as an independent, he predictably said, "No," but he made clear that he had been stung by his party's revolt against him. "My loyalty is first to country, and I appreciate some in my party don't accept that," he said. Still, no one I talked to believes Hagel will actually run as an independent. Some people who know him think he is going to quit politics entirely, while others believe that he will be loath to turn his back on a challenge from an upstart like Bruning. One person who has worked with him questions whether Hagel has lost his moorings. "I just don't know what is going on in that guy's head," he says. "I can't tell if he is unusually smart or just lost it."

Yet what Hagel seems to have lost is not so much his sanity or his grasp of world politics—his recent floor speech opposing the Reid-Feingold bill, which would have entirely cut off war funding, was a model of sober intelligence—but rather the part of the political cerebellum that allows politicians to put career before conviction. In my final conversation with him, I asked whether he saw irony in the fact that, while his anger about the war was driving him to run for president, what he had said and done about the war was putting the Republican nomination out of reach. I told him that he seemed to be paying a price for honesty. Hagel laughed. "Of course there is a price for honesty in politics," he said. "Are you paying it?" I asked. He replied, "I'll let others make that judgment." ◆

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Hillary was Right

The health care plan that dare not speak its name.

JONATHAN COHN

More than a dozen years later, Hillary Clinton wants the world to know that she has seen the error of her ways. That health care plan—the one that was supposed to revolutionize the medical industry and guarantee every American insurance—wasn't such a hot idea after all. "I think that both the process and the plan were flawed," Clinton admitted in an interview with *The New York Times*, demonstrating a level of contrition more fitting for an Iraq war architect. "We were trying to do something that was very hard to do, and we made a lot of mistakes."

A lot of people will hear that and nod in agreement. With health care reform emerging as a top issue for the 2008 presidential campaign, probably no politician is more identified with botching it than Senator Clinton. Across the political spectrum, "Hillarycare" has become shorthand for policy overreach and liberalism run amok. "It was too big, too complex, too government," former House Speaker Newt Gingrich recently said. Democrats have been critical, too: "It was probably too dogmatic," Tony Coelho, the strategist and former representative, told *National Journal*. It "had to be X, Y, and Z." Given Hillary's enormous role in shaping that plan, as an adviser to her husband and leader of his infamous 1993 health care task force, trying to defend it today might well amount to campaign suicide. That, undoubtedly, helps explain why Clinton has joined the critics, sticking it to herself not only during interviews but also at public events, such as a gathering of the American Medical Association last year. "Let's retire the old debates," she said to her one-time adversaries. "They haven't served our country well."

And maybe she has a point. After all, there's a pretty good case to be made that the Clinton administration as a whole—and Senator Clinton in particular—did make some egregious strategic errors, particularly when it came to selling the plan to Congress. If we're supposed to judge Clinton based on her decisions in 1993 and 1994, then it's good to know whether her political judgment was sound—not to mention what lessons she may have drawn from the experience.

But an equally important question, certainly, is the one nobody is asking: Just how well would the Clinton health care plan actually have worked? Would we have been better off under Hillarycare? Here's one good hint: Twelve years later, we're back talking about the very same problems, and even some of the very same solutions, all over again.

Hillarycare wasn't always a dirty word. People forget, but there was actually a time, not so long ago, when the Clinton health care plan was wildly popular and Hillary was considered a hero for her role in shaping it. It was September 1993—right after Bill Clinton formally introduced the plan in a nationally televised address and Hillary Clinton went before several congressional committees to defend it. By that time, everyone agreed the nation had a health care crisis on its hands: About 15 percent of the American population had no health insurance, and employers—who had historically provided private insurance to most of the U.S. workforce—were becoming increasingly reluctant to offer coverage. The big question was what, exactly, to do about it.

To the disappointment of the left, the Clinton campaign had, in 1992, rejected calls to create a true single-payer system—in which the government would insure everybody directly, as it now does through Medicare for the elderly (and through which many foreign governments cover all of their citizens). It did so out of deference to American political sensibilities, which traditionally frowned on too much government, and in keeping with its genuinely centrist instincts. As Hillary would later explain in her congressional testimony, "If you build on the employer/employee system, you are already building on what is available and familiar to most Americans." At the same time, the campaign had indicated that simply giving coverage to everybody—a relatively simple task, depending on how you did it—was actually not enough. Somehow, the Clinton team had to come up with a way to make medical care less expensive, because it was the rising costs that made health insurance so unaffordable and would, eventually, bankrupt not just many individuals but the country as a whole.

Late in the presidential campaign, Clinton had embraced a model of reform known by the clunky moniker "managed competition." Its premise was that it made sense to rely on private insurance as the primary source of coverage for working Americans, just as had always been the case in this country. But, in order to make coverage affordable to everybody, government had to restructure the insurance business. Regardless of income and medical condition, every single American needed to be able to choose from a menu of private plans, the way employees of large businesses generally did. If this happened, the theory went, a true market for health insurance would exist—and the competition to attract customers would force insurers to find ways of providing more cost-effective coverage. This would ultimately lead to better medical care and lower premiums, freeing up resources that could then be used—among other things—to extend insurance to people who didn't have it already.

It was an ambitious notion, certainly, and it promised to deliver a lot of what the left had always wanted—most importantly, truly universal coverage with government guaranteeing relatively generous benefits for all. It also involved closely regulating the insurance industry, to make sure that insurers would make coverage available to everybody. But, in its broad designs at least, managed competition was still not a particularly radical scheme. The idea actually traced its lineage back to discussions by health care industry leaders convened by a physician named Paul Ellwood, who had once advised Richard Nixon, and an economist named Alain Enthoven, who had worked in the Pentagon during the Vietnam war. And, in 1993—as Hillary's task force filled in the plan's numerous details—the business community's interests continued to get plenty of attention. Hillarycare would require all businesses to contribute something to their employees' insurance, but that contribution would be more predictable than directly paying for insurance

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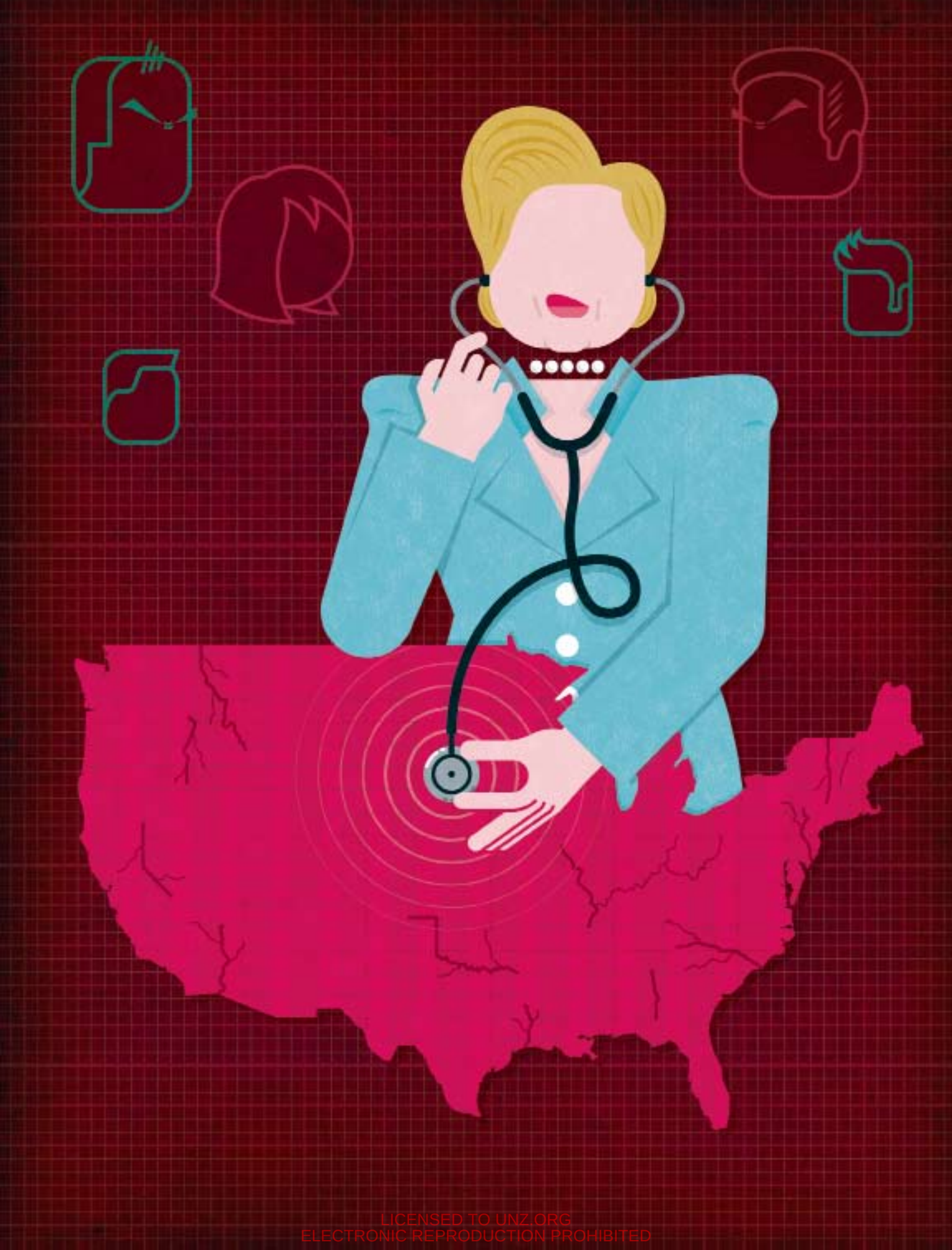

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premiums, which could vary wildly from year to year. While small businesses—many of which still didn't provide their workers with coverage—might have a harder time meeting the new obligation, the plan promised these companies special subsidies.

All of this did make for a pretty complicated schematic—at least behind the scenes. That's why the final proposal weighed in at a hefty 1,300 pages and critics were later able to lampoon it by diagramming it on poster-board charts. But, from the standpoint of the average American, the Clinton plan actually promised to work in a remarkably straightforward way. Once a year, the government would present people with a choice of private plans. All the plans would have generous benefits, covering even services like mental health that private coverage had traditionally given short shrift. The plans would vary in cost, depending in part on the level of financial protection they provided, with the government covering nearly the full price of the cheapest plan and individuals chipping in extra for the pricier alternatives. But all the plans would be affordable. The government would prohibit the plans from discriminating against people based on their medical condition: An insurer couldn't charge you higher premiums, or reject you outright, just because you had, say, diabetes. Most important, coverage would become a birthright. Everybody would get insurance from day one. And it would never get taken away.

Presented this way, the plan was awfully appealing, as an early poll in the *Los Angeles Times* showed: After listening to the president explain the plan in his speech, Americans said they supported it by a two-to-one margin. And, when Hillary toured Capitol Hill to promote the program, even some Republicans gushed over her handiwork—not to mention her obvious mastery of the subject. "I, for one, personally admire you," Senator Orrin Hatch told her.

But not everybody was so impressed. In late 1993, the Health Insurance Association of America—a trade group representing small insurers—introduced TV viewers to Harry and Louise. The fictional middle-class couple spent a great deal of time sitting at their kitchen table, flipping through a printed copy of the Clinton health plan and furrowing their brows as they stumbled across what they considered troubling details. One of Harry and Louise's complaints was that the Clinton plan would make almost everybody purchase insurance through giant purchasing cooperatives called "alliances." But the alliances were what allowed managed competition to work—they let individuals, small businesses, and the uninsured band together and get the kind of group pricing and discounts that large employers always had.

The following February, life imitated art when Elizabeth McCaughey, a very real scholar at the conservative Manhattan Institute, decided to tell the world about the myriad flaws of the Clinton plan by writing a screed for a political magazine. (As it happens, it's the one you are holding in your hands.) McCaughey, for her part, was shocked to discover that the Clinton plan called for covering only services deemed "necessary" and "appropriate." But, as *The Atlantic*'s James Fallows would later note in a devastating rejoinder, every insurance program in the world had such a clause. The Clinton plan, at least, left decisions over what those terms meant in the hands of a democratically accountable National Health Board, as opposed to secret discussions held within the offices of insurance companies.

Harry, Louise, and McCaughey also worried a lot about big, bad managed care, fretting that the Clinton plan would force everybody into cheap health maintenance organizations (HMOs), which restricted choice of doctors and access to treatments. "Having choices we don't like is no choice at all," Louise explained in one spot. The germ of truth here was that the Clinton plan really did have incentives for people to choose HMOs, since those would likely be the cheapest options in most cases. But study after study had shown that the best HMOs provided superb medical care—better, in fact, than more traditional fee-for-service insurance. (They were more integrated and generally did a better job of emphasizing preventative care.) Besides, the Clinton plan wouldn't actually force people into managed care. Indeed, at a time when many companies were doing precisely that—by choosing HMOs for their workers without giving them alternatives—the Clinton plan proposed to guarantee every American access to at least one old-fashioned plan that didn't limit choice of doctor. These more traditional plans would be more expensive, to be sure, but the option would always be there for people willing to pay that extra premium.

Still, not every objection was as unfounded as McCaughey's—or as transparently self-serving as Harry and Louise's, who were created by an industry (small insurers) whose standard business practices (avoiding sick people) the Clinton plan sought to make illegal. A different set of concerns came from more thoughtful experts like Ellwood and Enthoven, the fathers of managed competition. Of particular concern to them was a limit on how much insurers could raise premiums from year to year. Government was in no position to set such limits, the argument went, because it couldn't determine as well as the market what the proper level of medical spending was—or how to allocate it. If, for example, the cap was too low, doctors and hospitals wouldn't get the money they needed—and would begin cutting back on services.

From a policy standpoint, these caps were indeed the plan's most controversial element—and the ones about which questions could most legitimately be raised. But, looking back, even these concerns were probably overblown. The task force had included this cap partly to satisfy the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which, in its official estimates of the program's cost, wouldn't assume that having a bunch of insurance plans was likely to save money, as the Clintons insisted it would. Since CBO's projections would guide the debate, and since political moderates were likely to abandon the plan if it threatened to raise deficit spending or spark new taxes, the task force threw in the cap. But it was entirely possible premiums would not have exceeded the caps, at least not for a while: In fact, over the next few years, premium increases stayed under the limits set by the caps. And that was without a lot of the administrative savings that Hillarycare would have generated. Don't forget, too, that Congress always had the power to ease the caps if they really threatened to disrupt medical services—although the hope was always that limiting spending would ultimately push the health care system to be even more efficient.

As we all now know, those objections ended up carrying the day. The fear of rationing played directly into public fears of government incompetence—a fear the press did little to dispel. Harry and Louise and McCaughey may have been talking nonsense, but they spooked a lot of Americans. And, even though many interest groups stood to benefit from the Clinton plan—chief among them, large employers already paying for generous worker benefits—few lifted a finger to help. The plan died, and, just like that, Hillary went from savior to scapegoat.

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Racism in the Islamic World

How can peace prevail in the Middle East in the face of Islamic bigotry and hate? When will moderate Muslims speak out?

For years, the U.N., led by Islamic and Arab nations and their sympathizers, has accused Israel of racism, but the world consistently turns a blind eye to open, seething anti-Semitism in Islamic society.

What are the facts?

In one of the most astonishing propaganda coups ever, a United Nations conference on racism, which took place in Durban South Africa in 2001, declared that Zionism is racism. No wonder the U.S. and Israel walked out of the meeting, which was dominated by representatives of Islamic and Arab states and other anti-Israel forces, and whose conclusions were predictable from the outset.

> "Until Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force."

The supreme irony of this conference was that it accused no other nation of racism—only Israel. In truth, Israel is perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse and tolerant country in the world. More than half of Israel's Jewish population consists of people of color—blacks from Ethiopia and Yemen, as well as brown-skinned people from Morocco, Iran, Syria, Egypt and Israel itself. In addition, Israel's population includes more than one million Arabs, who enjoy the same civil rights as Jewish Israelis. In Israel hate speech is banned, and it is against the law to discriminate based on race or religion.

In contrast, anti-Semitism—a poisonous form of racism directed specifically against the Jewish people—is rampant in most all Islamic societies. Not only is anti-Semitism commonplace in Muslim nations, but it is propagated shamelessly by their leaders, in state-sponsored media, and by Muslim clergy.

For example, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed declared in a 2003 speech to the Organization of Islamic Conference that, "today Jews rule the world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them." Imagine if an American president had made a similarly sweeping and bigoted statement about blacks, Latinos or any other race—what a justifiable uproar, perhaps even an impeachment, would ensue. Yet there was no condemnation by the Muslim world of Mr. Mohamed's comments. Rather, virtually all of the conference's Muslim leaders actually voiced their approval.

In response to a terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia in May 2004, Crown Prince Abdullah declared that "Zionism is behind [these] terrorist actions in the kingdom." (Zionism is the code word often used by Islamic anti-Semites for Jews.) U.S. Congressman Tom Lantos called the Prince's assertion "an outrage . . . blatant hypocrisy," but Islamic leaders were silent. In fact, millions of Muslims still insist that Zionists were behind the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Anti-Semitism is expressed so freely and ubiquitously in most Islamic societies that no citizen can escape it. During Ramadan in 2002, Egypt's state-controlled TV aired "Horseman Without a Horse," a program based on the notorious forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in which Jews allegedly use the blood of non-Jews to make Passover matzot. In Iran, a TV series, "Zahra's Blue Eyes," portrays "Zionists" kidnapping Palestinian children and harvesting their organs.

Perhaps nowhere is the hatred of Jews more virulent than among the Palestinians. Most perniciously, Palestinian children are taught in school that Jews are descended from apes and pigs and that the most noble thing they can do is to kill Jews. Muslim clerics like Imam Ibrahim Madiras, an employee of the Palestinian Authority, declared in a 2005 television sermon, "Jews are a cancer" and later that, "Muslims will kill the Jews . . . [and] rejoice in Allah's victory." No surprise, then, that the 1982 doctoral dissertation of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas makes the astounding claim that "Zionists" collaborated with the Nazis to annihilate the Jewish people in order to drive the survivors to Palestine.

Anti-Semitism and the prospects for peace: Islamic anti-Semitism permeates the Arab Middle East and creates an atmosphere in which Jews are reviled and represented as subhuman. How can the Palestinian people embrace peace with a people represented by their religious and political leaders as dehumanized, evil beings? Even more importantly, how can Israel be expected to trust a so-called peace partner who expresses abject hatred and murderous intent toward Jews on a daily basis? Yet the U.S. and many European nations continue to demand that Israel make one-sided sacrifices for peace with a people steeped in racism and committed to its destruction.

Until Islamic leaders muster the integrity to relentlessly condemn anti-Semitism (and its evil twin, anti-Zionism), we can't expect Israel to accept a forced peace with the Palestinians. Likewise, until moderate Muslims reject racism in all forms, they can't expect Islam to enjoy full respect as a political and spiritual force among the world's people. 94A

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But look at everything that has happened since that time. By the end of the '90s, virtually every American was enrolled in an HMO or some other type of managed-care plan—in other words, precisely the scenario that Harry and Louise, along with McCaughey, had warned would happen if the Clintons got their way. But managed care had evolved in a rather different direction than it might have under Hillarycare. The Clinton plan had proposed to regulate HMOs closely. Not only would the standard benefit package limit the ability of insurers to skimp on necessary care for people who needed it, but the Clinton plan also would have required all insurance plans to collect and publish data about how well their beneficiaries were doing (like, for example, whether they all got recommended tests, how satisfied they were with the service, and so on). This would have bolstered the best managed care organizations, the nonprofit group practices (like Group Health of Puget Sound in Seattle or Harvard Community Health in Boston, both of which had excellent reputations in the '90s) that really did promote high-quality medicine. There was even a patients' bill of rights, to make sure that people who thought their insurers had denied treatments improperly could appeal such decisions in a binding legal process.

It was these sorts of provisions, which took pages to describe, that made the Clinton plan such an object of derision. And yet, in the absence of such rules, the "good" HMOs never stood a chance. For-profit insurers gobbled up the market, and, in response to demands by employers to deliver cheaper insurance, they paid very little attention to quality of care. Horror stories about improper treatment denials and interference in the clinical process proliferated. Studies showed that insurers were routinely using medical treatment guidelines that many doctors considered substandard. By the late '90s, the public was clamoring for a patients' bill of rights—which, had it passed, would have looked much like the one Hillary had thought to include in the first place.

The HMO reform debate eventually subsided in the face of some more pressing concerns, such as the lack of prescription coverage for Medicare recipients—who were, as of a few years ago, desperately struggling to pay for their drugs. But the Clinton plan had anticipated that issue, too: As part of its effort to modernize the entire health care system, it would have added a prescription-drug benefit to Medicare. And it would have had the government administer that benefit directly, as it does for the rest of Medicare. (By contrast, the existing drug benefit—which the Bush administration and the Republicans created in 2003—uses private insurers as intermediaries. That costs more money, since private insurers require extra subsidies to stay with the program, and it doesn't apply as much bargaining leverage to the pharmaceutical companies.)

Lately, every day seems to bring word about some new employer struggling with the costs of their employees' health insurance; if it's not the automakers, it's the airlines or the telecommunications industry. It's hurting American competitiveness; in one celebrated case a few years ago, Toyota cited high, unpredictable health care costs here as a reason to locate a new plant in Canada instead. And it's poisoning labor-management relations. In 2004, California grocery workers walked out for four months because their employers—fearful that Wal-Mart, with its famously meager benefits, was coming into the area—were threatening to offer lower health benefits. Now both the union and the grocers say they support a universal health care system that, even if it requires some employer contribution, would at least create a level playing field and began to restrain rising costs, which have started climbing again almost as quickly as they were before. In other words, they support doing exactly what the Clinton health care plan would have done.

And, of course, today some 45 million Americans have no health insurance—or nearly 16 percent of the population, which is about one point higher than the figure was when Hillary and her task force got to work. You can say a lot of things about the plan that process produced: that it was complicated to explain, that it was botched politically, and that, above all, it was hardly perfect. (Some of us still think a true single-payer system would work better.) But, if Hillarycare accomplished absolutely nothing else, it would have made certain every American had access to affordable health care—sparing millions of people physical harm, financial calamity, and countless indignities. For a plan that was supposedly such a debacle, that would have been an awfully mighty accomplishment.

You won't hear anybody in U.S. politics admit as much right now. In Washington, at least, praising Hillarycare will get you laughed off the talk shows. But the rising anxiety about affordable medical care, combined with the worries about health care's effect on the economy, have launched yet another serious debate about health care reform—the first since the early '90s. And, if you look closely at the proposals experts and officials are tossing around, you may start to recognize some familiar elements. With the exception of true single-payer plans, virtually every idea for universal coverage now on the political agenda envisions creating a system in which, like Hillarycare, people will shop around for private health plans. They also envision, as did Hillarycare, a government role in making sure affordable, high-quality plans are made available—typically, by creating (again, like Hillarycare) some sort of purchasing cooperative through which some, if not all, of the population would buy their coverage. That's true of the plan former Senator John Edwards proposed as part of his presidential campaign a few months ago. It's true of the plan Senator Ron Wyden introduced to Congress back in December. It's even true of the plan former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney signed into law before leaving office last year—even though Romney has made mocking Hillarycare a staple of his campaign rhetoric as he seeks the Republican presidential nomination.

Still, while just about every reformer has borrowed elements of the old Clinton health plan, none of the leading presidential contenders has yet proposed something as comprehensive and far-reaching—aware, no doubt, that trying to do so much so quickly may be more than the political system will tolerate. For the most part, the serious reformers concentrate on getting coverage to everybody—leaving more wholesale reorganizations of the health care system, the kind that might yield serious cost savings, until later.

What remains to be seen, though, is whether Hillary herself can take even that more modest step. No candidate in the presidential race knows more about health care than she does. No candidate has a stronger, more proven record of fighting to expand coverage. And, yet, no candidate has to act with the caution that she does. Achieving universal health care will probably require the leadership of somebody who can push public opinion—and it's not clear that she can do so, at least, not as long as Hillarycare's reputation remains what it is. It's a shame, really, because if there were any justice, she'd have the best one-liner on health care of any candidate out there: "I was right the first time." ◆

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A Conversation with Wynton Marsalis

"Where Y'all At?"

That's the question that jazz legend Wynton Marsalis will be chewing on with his friend of twenty years, TNR Literary Editor Leon Wieseltier, when the two sit down on June 4 to analyze how the interplay of race and culture create the language of jazz.

The latest installment in TNR's *Sixth and I Conversation Series* is sure to be especially entertaining – Marsalis, one of the greatest jazz musicians of his time, also happens to be a virtuoso conversationalist, with opinions on nearly everything from politics to New Orleans to the history of jazz. Join us for the discussion and make it an evening you'll remember.

Photo by Jill Krementz

Monday, June 4 at 7pm

Location:
Sixth & I Historic Synagogue
600 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
Metro: Gallery Place

For directions to the event log on to:
sixthandi.org/ReachingUs.htm

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The Believers

The death of a missionary and the world of Christian martyrdom.

ELIZA GRISWOLD

American missionary Gracia Burnham was abducted by the Al Qaeda–linked guerrilla group Abu Sayyaf in May 2001. She would spend 377 days in the Philippine jungle as their hostage.

AFP PHOTO/NEWSCOM

Gracia Burnham needed a backpack. Months earlier, she and her husband, Martin, had been kidnapped and dragged into the jungles of the Philippines by members of the Al Qaeda–linked Abu Sayyaf, or "Bearer of the Sword," and they had nothing in which to carry their few belongings. Until, that is, one morning when one of their kidnappers was shot and killed in the midst of a blundered rescue effort by the Filipino army. As the other militants divvied up the dead man's belongings, Gracia snatched his backpack, and she and Martin shoved in their possessions—a batik sheet, some underwear, a shared toothbrush. Gracia and Martin, both evangelical missionaries, were nearly starving: The kidnappers had kept them unfed and on the move. At various times, they had watched a male hostage led off to be beheaded or several women taken to be raped. "Abu Sayyaf thought of themselves as pious and holy," Burnham told me recently. "All this lofty chivalry crumbled before our eyes. Anything they wanted or desired, all they had to say was, 'This is jihad and the rules don't apply.'"

Suddenly, the shooting started again. Terrified, Gracia watched as the Filipino soldiers who were supposed to rescue them sprayed the open field with automatic weapons fire. Her group of fellow hostages and terrorists fled into the jungle as a helicopter bore down overhead. As she raced along the path to catch up with the others, she felt "so light," she said. She realized she had left the backpack, and all their scant provisions, behind on the trail. In tears, she told Martin how stupid she'd been. "He looked at me for a split second and said, 'I forgive you, Gracia. Now you have to forgive yourself.'"

Burnham, a 48-year-old pixie with blonde highlights, has

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spent much of the time since her 2001 abduction practicing forgiveness. I first met her in April at the Comfort Inn in Franklin, Tennessee. It was 6:30 in the morning, and she was dreamily eating cereal in front of the early-morning news. She hadn't needed to set an alarm clock. "God woke me up," she said, looking up from the table with dark and earnest eyes that seemed to take up most of her face. Burnham had traveled to Tennessee from her home in Rose Hill, Kansas, to attend a conference of contemporary Christian martyrdom hosted by Voice of the Martyrs, an evangelical nonprofit that has, since 1967, been "aiding Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ." Thanks to Gracia's generosity, I was allowed to attend the conference with her and was the only journalist present.

When Gracia's book about her ordeal in the jungle, *In the Presence of My Enemies*, hit the *New York Times* bestseller list in 2003, she became a superstar. She was born in Cairo, Illinois, and grew up as a "p.k.," or pastor's kid, deciding at an early age to become an evangelical Christian like the rest of her family. When I met her in April, only her worn, square hand holding the plastic motel spoon betrayed her life's work: For 15 years, she and her husband worked in remote parts of the Philippines as missionaries for New Tribes, a nondenominational evangelical group that focuses on planting churches among the last tribal groups who have never heard of the gospel. Before entering the field, New Tribes missionaries undergo extensive training, including rigorous language, medical, and dental skills, as well as survival tactics—New Tribes has one of the highest death rates of any mission group. In the Philippines, Martin, a pilot, delivered mail and supplies and shuttled the sick over the dense jungle; Gracia, a radio operator, home-schooled their three children, Jeff, Zach, and Mindy.

On the night of May 27, 2001, while Gracia and Martin were celebrating their eighteenth wedding anniversary at the Dos Palmas Resort on the Philippines' Palawan Island, masked men burst into their room and led them at gunpoint down to a waiting boat. As the boat sped away from the resort, the kidnappers shouted "Allahu Akbar!" "That's when we knew who had us and that we were in trouble," Gracia said. She and Martin would spend the next 377 days as Abu Sayyaf's hostages.

That night on the boat, the kidnappers handed Martin a satellite phone and told him to call the authorities: "Tell them you've been taken by bin Laden's group." Martin didn't know what that meant, and, at that point in 2001, neither did most of the world. But, three months later, in the wake of September 11, the link between Abu Sayyaf and Al Qaeda brought massive American attention to the kidnappers and the two U.S. missionary hostages. An elite team of U.S. Special Forces flew to the southern Philippines, but, thanks to a Visiting Forces Agreement between the United States and the Philippines, it could only advise and watch a series of botched rescue attempts as the Filipino army alternated between colluding with Abu Sayyaf and shooting its way into camp.

During months of hunger, fear, sleeping on the mosquito-infested ground, and hiking for hours seemingly in circles, Gracia's faith occasionally failed her. "The worst part was seeing who I really was," she said. She coveted food sent into the jungle for them, which Abu Sayyaf refused to share. She tired of praying to "a God who sometimes seemed to have forgotten us." She would say to Martin, "You know, scripture says these words: 'If you will ask anything in my name, I will do it.' In my situation, that verse is not true, so why is that in there?" But Martin encouraged her. "You believe it all, or you don't believe it at all," he told her gently.

"We thought that, at the beginning, the fact that we were Christian missionaries would be held against us, but we found that not to be true at all," she said. "In fact, they really admired us because Martin explained that New Tribes missions go into places where people are worshipping rocks and trees, their ancestral spirits. They're not worshipping the one true God, and we tell them who the one true God is. So they [Abu Sayyaf] felt we were kind of doing the same thing, which shocked me because we are as far from Islam as I think you can be." Her hatefulness and covetousness surprised and dismayed her, so she and Martin prayed for a way to love their captors. "We never forgot they were the bad guys," she said. "But they were also our family."

Then, on June 7, 2002, for the seventeenth time in more than a year, Filipino soldiers blasted into camp in an attempted rescue. By the time she dropped from her hammock to the ground, Gracia had been shot in the leg. Martin lay dead beside her.

Following his death, Martin Burnham became a modern-day martyr for many evangelical Christians, one of 70 million killed since the beginning of the faith, according to the World Christian Encyclopedia. In stark contrast to the image of Christian martyrs as a phenomenon of the ancient past—the apostle Peter crucified upside-down, or early pilgrims fed to Roman lions—the encyclopedia explains that 60 percent of those 70 million have died in the twentieth century. "People are used to the Joan of Arc type of martyrdom, an individual on trial," Todd Johnson, co-author of the encyclopedia, told me. "This is a context in which people are being killed for being Christians: In Uganda, for example, if you think of *The Last King of Scotland*, Idi Amin ordered his soldiers to go into Christian villages and kill everybody—men, women, and children." In a companion volume to the encyclopedia, Johnson catalogued each and every Christian martyr he could from the beginning of the faith to the present day. Flipping through the pages, he said, "Martin isn't in here yet, but he will be." After Martin Burnham's death, the number of applications to New Tribes soared, bearing out a deeper trend: Martyrdom is an effective tool of modern evangelization.

I've investigated Christian martyrdom in Nigeria, Sudan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Yemen, and Iraq, among other countries. In Mosul, at the beginning of the Iraq war, an undercover priest showed me a burnt Bible and a glass of what looked like paint chips. "This is the blood of the first martyr of Kurdistan," he said, holding up the glass. It turned out he had scraped dried blood from the floor of a Christian bookshop where one of his converts had been shot.

Today, most of us associate the word "martyr" with Islam, with boys—and sometimes girls—wearing white headbands and strapped with explosives. And, indeed, the Arabic word for martyr, *shaheed*, and the Greek word, *martys*, both mean the same thing: witness. In the early days of each embattled faith, holding fast to one's beliefs in the face of torment or persecution—witnessing—could result in death, and the Crusades made this form of faith-based brinkmanship more prevalent. But, by the late twentieth century, Islamic and Christian martyrdom have largely come to mean different things: one, a willingness to kill; the other, a willingness to die.

This was the central theme of the Voice of the Martyrs gathering, called "Enduring Faith," that I attended with Gracia one Saturday last month at the Christ Community Church in Franklin. The conference's aim was to inform those evangelical Christians who had never heard of contemporary martyr-

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dom about the suffering of Christians around the world. Outside, pin oaks and magnolia trees with still-hard blossoms ringed the church. A steel monument that looked like a giant Exacto knife marked the entrance.

The Voice of the Martyrs gathering cost nothing to attend, although in the church vestibule card tables were laden with paraphernalia for sale. In the morning, I milled around the tables among the 300 other attendees, some of whom had driven for days to meet Gracia, as we looked at literature and jewelry, including two grey rubber interlocked bracelets, like Lance Armstrong's yellow LIVESTRONG ones, except that they were attached together like handcuffs. One pale grey one read BOUND WITH THEM and the other, darker grey, HEBREWS: 13: 3 REMEMBER THOSE IN PRISON AS THOUGH YOU WERE IN PRISON WITH THEM, AND THOSE ILL-TREATED AS THOUGH YOU TOO FELT THEIR TORMENT. There were also T-shirts silk-screened with lions' eyes, which read, IT DIDN'T END WITH THE COLISEUM.

On another table was a stack of what looked like orange kitchen garbage bags covered with Asian characters I couldn't identify. The language, I was told, was Korean and the words Bible verses. The bags themselves were balloons. Since the 1960s, Voice of the Martyrs has been filling them with helium, releasing them along the border between South and North Korea, and praying that they will reach those in the North who have never heard about the Bible. (The government of North Korea reportedly orders anyone who finds these "balloons" to deliver them to the police station.)

As the conference began, there were moments of prayer for North Korea's President Kim Jong Il and Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Both North Korea and Iran lie geographically within an area where the drive to bring the gospel is especially intense. "We work mainly in the 10/40 window, the bastion of Communism, Islam, and Hinduism," Robert Brock, a mission representative for Voice of the Martyrs, said. The 10/40 window is the rectangle of land located from ten to 40 degrees north of the equator from West Africa through Southeast Asia. This plot of land, also called the "Window of Opportunity," is home to 2.7 billion people, almost half the world's population. Eighty percent of them live on $500 or less per year, and 90 percent have never heard the gospel. The 10/40 window is the last great frontier for Christian missionaries. It is also the most "resistant," i.e., ideologically opposed to evangelical Christianity. "It's the hardest place to work, my friend," Brock said. "It could cost you your life."

Not all martyrdom lies so far away, however. At breakfast that morning, I'd met Tom Zurowski, a baby-faced preacher from Albion, New York. He told me that he had first come to know Jesus one night at age 19, while sitting at the end of his bed with a hunting knife, contemplating suicide. Christ had saved his life. A recovering alcoholic and drug user, Zurowski is now the director of Global Response Network, an organization that, like Voice of the Martyrs, "aids suffering Christians as they take up their cross and follow Jesus."

Zurowski was introduced to contemporary martyrdom more than a decade ago, when a friend asked whether he

Gracia and her husband, Martin, during happier times (below) and nearly a year after their kidnapping (bottom). Right: Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Sabaya.

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would be willing to die to save the life of an unborn child. He had no answer, until he was on his knees in the street outside an abortion clinic. When a car trying to get past pushed its bumper against him, he knew he wasn't going to move. He was willing to die to stop abortion. Along with the other demonstrators, Zurowski was arrested and held in prison for several weeks. In prison, he first heard that Christian persecution was a contemporary problem.

Since then, Zurowski has made more than 40 trips overseas. On the church stage at the conference, he told the audience the story of one teenage boy he had met in southern Sudan who had escaped from slavery in the North. As a seven-year-old, the boy had snuck out of his master's house to go to church. When he came home, the irate master nailed the child's knees together and his feet to a board, saying, "Today, you worshipped infidels." Zurowski showed us a photograph of the boy: His maimed legs looked hinged like a stork's.

The most outspoken speaker was Reverend Mujahid el Masih, which is Arabic for "warrior for Christ." A former Muslim, he had been forced to flee Pakistan after converting other Muslims to evangelical Christianity. But the threats on his life have followed him here to the United States. Two weeks earlier, while speaking in Sioux Falls, Iowa, he had received anonymous letters saying that, if he preached, he would be murdered and the church would be bombed. He went ahead anyway. "Allah is not the same God as the God of the Bible," he said. "We don't need bombs to destroy terrorism, we need Bibles."

But if the enemy far is Islam, then the enemy near is political correctness: "Political correctness is more evil than Osama bin Laden," el Masih said. Salvation is black and white; anyone saying otherwise is sinful. I waited for a tirade against liberals, but that's not what came next. "God won't rebuke Hillary," he said. The true hypocrites were the so-called conservatives that evangelical Christians threw their whole electoral weight behind for the last two elections. Those who insist "Islam means peace," even though they know better, he said, are as bad as the Biblical Pharisees. He did a short Q&A for people wanting to learn about Islam. "Love Muslims," el Masih said. "But don't trust them."

When Gracia took the church stage, her tone was markedly different. "People have called Martin a martyr," she said. "That has always bothered me." The 300 nodding heads before her stopped nodding, but she continued. For Gracia, losing Martin in the jungle was not about heroism or martyrdom. His death was merely something all Christians need to be prepared to do: "give up everything for the Lord and being willing to die for him if need be," she said. "There's no safe or easy way to be a follower of Christ."

At the break, three teenage Mennonite girls, who had driven about four hours from their home in Bagdad, Kentucky, to meet Gracia, approached the book table. The girls wore matching gingham dresses with puffy sleeves and three-button vests. Mercy Grace, who was 15, wore a small white veil, with her dishwater blonde hair pulled tightly back under it. She had decided to become a missionary three years earlier, after reading Elizabeth Eliot's book *Shadow of the Almighty*, which told the story of her husband, Jim, who was killed in 1956 by Ecuador's Auca Indians. (The first time I heard about Eliot, I was in the living room of Reverend Franklin Graham, known as personal pastor to George W. Bush, and Franklin's wife showed me an Auca spear like the one used to martyr Eliot.)

Mercy Grace subsequently fell in love with Gracia and her story, and her family piled into the car so she could come to the conference and meet her. As a missionary, Mercy Grace didn't know yet where she would be called to go. "I'd like her to go to a closed Muslim country," her mother said, "because people have the idea that Muslims are a lost cause." She went on, "But her daddy doesn't. He's afraid of her being in that culture." I asked Mercy Grace what she thought of dying for Christ and becoming a martyr. "It would be neat!" she said, grinning widely enough to show her braces. Her mother nudged her. She closed her mouth. "It would be a privilege," she corrected herself.

The next morning, Gracia attended a senior-citizen Bible study at the First Baptist Church in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, where she'd been invited to speak.

Fifteen frosted-haired ladies, some wearing sweaters decorated with hollyhocks, gasped as Gracia pulled a piece of stiff batik fabric from a Voice of the Martyrs white plastic shopping bag. Using her teeth, Gracia showed the class how she'd wrapped the fabric, called a malong, around her to make a changing room and a bathroom. The toilet was a theme of the weekend. "The first few times I made a mess of it and had to wait until I got to the next river to wash it," she said.

"You've washed it since you've come out of the jungle," one woman said firmly. Gracia shook her head. "If I did, it might fall apart." There was another gasp.

She then showed the ladies how the fabric served as a blanket, a backpack, and even, on one occasion, a stretcher for a 14-year-old Abu Sayyaf member named Ahmed. At first, she had loathed Ahmed for hoarding food when she had none, throwing stones at her while she bathed—fully clothed—in the river, and pushing her along the trail saying "*faster, faster*." As she and Martin slowly starved, Gracia prayed to find a way to love Ahmed.

One day, he was injured in a firefight and soiled himself. Gracia could see he was mortified. Thinking of her own son, Zach, who was about the same age, she took Ahmed's clothes to the river to wash them. There, she was filled with love. The last time Gracia saw Ahmed, who had been carried wounded through the jungle in the malong, like a sling, he had gone stark raving mad and was tied by the hands and feet to the walls of a hut in the southern Philippines. Someone had stuffed a sock in his mouth to keep him from screaming. She wondered aloud to the Bible study class where Ahmed was now—still crazy, perhaps, or pushing another hostage up another steep mountain path. Or, most likely, he had died and gone to hell.

After Gracia finished speaking, she and I went out into the church's hallway. "You know I don't only think that Abu Sayyaf is going to hell," she said, fixing me with her fierce and loving dark blue eyes. I understood that she was talking about me. For Gracia, absolute salvation is just that: absolute.

Several days earlier, Abu Sayyaf had beheaded seven more hostages—Christian construction workers on the island of Jolo. Because Gracia follows news from the Philippines, I thought she would have heard about this, but she hadn't. Her eyes momentarily died. "So many of the kids weren't bent on jihad," she told me. In a world of extreme poverty, Abu Sayyaf was a "career move." In the end, though, "whether they were bent on jihad or not, all those guys wanted was to die in a gun battle so they could bypass the judgment of God and go straight to paradise," she explained. "If they couldn't die in jihad, their next choice was to go to America and get a good job." ◆

Eliza Griswold is currently a Nieman Fellow in journalism at Harvard University. Her first book of poems, Wideawake Field, has just been published.

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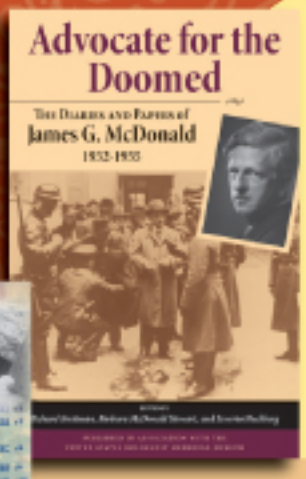

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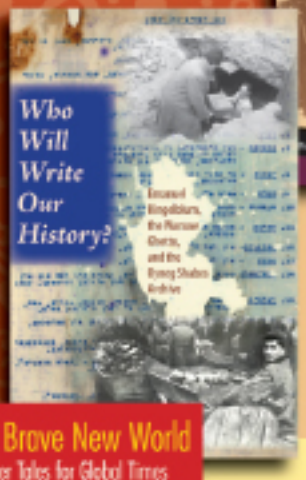

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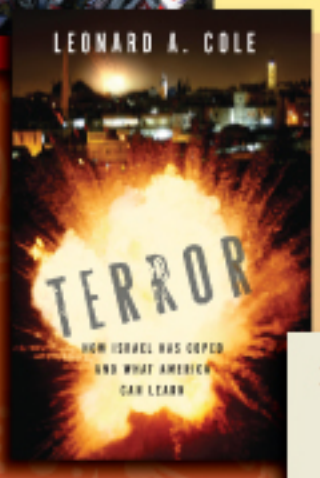

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

FROM DARK TO LIGHT

He didn't want to be called a hero. He said he was just a survivor. The reasons for this distinction, far darker and deeper than modesty, are major themes in an engrossing documentary—*I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life and Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal*. As everyone who could possibly care already knows, Wiesenthal, who was imprisoned in German concentration camps for four and a half years, spent most of his subsequent life tracking down Nazi war criminals and helping to bring them to justice. This new documentary recounts that life—the relevant parts of it.

One passage in an interview sets the tone. Wiesenthal, who was in Lvov with his mother in 1941, is asked what happened when the Germans arrived. He says that they packed his mother in a crowded cattle car and sent her to a death camp. (He was sent elsewhere.) He says, "I hope that she died in the transport." Then he asks the interviewer, "Do you know what it means to say 'I hope that she died in the transport'?"

Wiesenthal, born in what was then Austria-Hungary, was a thirty-three-year-old architect when he was imprisoned. The film includes little about his life in various camps, though we are given sufficient reminders of what went on there. After he was liberated in 1945—he remembers his first sight of an American tank—he was, comprehensibly enough, impelled to devote his life to searching out people who were responsible for the horror. His mantra, "I have never forgotten you," may have a tinge of survivor-guilt, but it was a driving and fertile force.

Funding for Wiesenthal's work had to be raised as he went along, operating mostly from an office in Vienna. What is remarkable in the many interviews with him that are spliced throughout this picture is that he was a thoroughly committed man, but not a monomaniac—his passion to extirpate enemies of humanity did not strip him of his own.

Despite his accomplishments, Wiesenthal had critics, even among Jews. Some accused him of providing inaccurate statistics about the number of gentiles killed in the camps; some, of exaggerating his accomplishments. (The film includes a clip of a meeting in Vienna where he was heckled from the audience.) Two instances of dissent stand out. He was attacked for exaggerating his contribution to the capture of Adolf Eichmann in 1960. But he claimed only that he had provided some material to help the captors. In 1986, when Kurt Waldheim ran for the presidency of Austria and traces of his Nazi affiliations were discovered, Wiesenthal declined to join the campaign against him. Excoriated for this behavior, he explained that the last thing he wanted was to bring a Nazi criminal suspect to trial and see him freed because of insufficient evidence.

TOMASZ WALENTA

This film, though it does not sanctify, is of course complimentary to Wiesenthal. (It was produced by Moriah Films, the documentary film production unit of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, though it was begun only after his death, in 2005.) I am not competent to sit as magistrate in the controversy about him, only to report that he is shown to be a carefully persistent man whose life had been scarred with horror. It is an irresistible portrait. The film was co-written by the director Richard Trank and Rabbi Marvin Hier, the dean of the center. Trank's directing is highly skilled, aided by the fluent editing of Inbal B. Lessner. The narration is read by Nicole Kidman, as her tribute to the subject. It would be rude not to thank her.

I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN YOU: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SIMON WIESENTHAL
(Luminous Velocity)

DAY NIGHT DAY NIGHT
(IFC First Take)

THE VALET
(Sony Pictures Classics)

Inevitably, the world of art has a new subject, the suicide bomber. In film there was Hany Abu-Assad's *Paradise Now*, and in fiction John Updike's *Terrorist*. But a new film is in a way more daring than the previous works on the subject that I know. It does not explore political and social motives or spiritual consecration. It is almost completely uninterested in the reasons for the protagonist's behavior: it merely and sheerly enters her state of mind as if it were entering a chamber, a ritual, a locus of possibility.

Day Night Day Night is the first fiction feature written and directed by Julia Loktev (who has made a feature documentary). The visual and nearly silent quality of the beginning, which is generally maintained throughout the first half, almost suggests that we are being shown a second film on this subject. First, there was a realistic documentary (which of course there wasn't), and now we are seeing, so to speak, the interior of the documentary's realistic subject, the shadows and very strange peace within a young woman who is going to carry a bomb.

She is never given a name. She arrives at a bus terminal in New York carrying a bag and a tennis racquet. (Soon we

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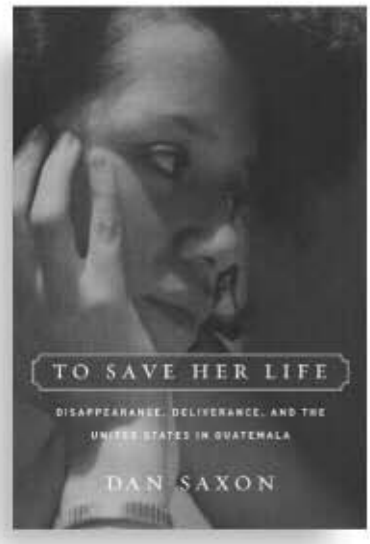

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understand that the racquet was intended to mislead anyone who might be watching.) She gets in a car and is driven by a tacit chauffeur to a hotel in New Jersey; in her room the chauffeur draws the curtain and leaves. She says nothing when she is alone. She sleeps, then scrubs herself thoroughly. The next day three hooded and masked men arrive, and, treating her most courteously, they prepare her for her job. We don't yet know definitely what it is, but we begin to suspect when the three men pray (a prayer in which she does not join). She is carefully instructed in a false identity—name, address, family background, and so on. She surrenders her cell phone. She is then strapped with a bomb in a backpack and is shown how to detonate it.

Through all these proceedings she is obedient, unquestioning. Then she is driven to a subway station in Manhattan, and sound effectively enters the film. Eventually she makes her way to Times Square. On her way, in and out of the subway, commonplace things happen. She buys some pretzels, a candied apple. She is neither blithe nor tense. She shows no sense of approaching finality. She simply has stepped into this role of suicide bomber as she might have stepped into her clothes.

What is particularly chilling is that she seems to have accepted this task as a reasonable possibility to deal with problems of her own. (Once she murmurs something about "meeting him": whether "him" is a man or a deity is not clear.) Toward the end, after some minor mishap, she tries to talk, via pay phone, with several people. They cannot be reached. We then see the lights of Manhattan, the electrically starred skies. The picture ends—in Times Square.

Loktev and the actress Luisa Williams take their film out of the realm of physical terror into a conceptual abstraction. Their daring is that they do not explain: they show. Their picture is a distillation of a state that could, if needed, be attached to one set or another of bomber motivations. Here, uncannily rendered, is *das Ding an sich*.

In the chapter on farce in his masterwork, *The Life of the Drama*, Eric Bentley writes: "Every form of drama has its rendezvous with madness." The madness of farce, he says, is that "human life in this art form is horribly attenuated. Life is a kind of universal milling around, a rushing from bedroom to bedroom driven by demons more dreadful than sensuality."

The French writer-director Francis Veber is more at home in this madhouse than anyone else now practicing: he is masterly and prolific. (Farceurs seem to be more prolific than other playwrights: are they telling us something about life?) Born in 1937, he has been working in films since 1969 and has scattered a lot of laughs along the way. Some of his work is known in this country through transformation. One of his plays was the source of a Billy Wilder film, *Buddy Buddy*. Another was the basis for the Mike Nichols film *The Birdcage*. But he needs no American validation (although, in fact, he has worked in Hollywood). His French films—that is, his films made and originally shown in France—are usually not only bright in themselves: they confirm Veber as one of the most thorough classicists now at work in film anywhere in the Western world. Anyone who has seen *The Closet* or *The Dinner Game* may well have thought that, if such masters of French farce as Feydeau and Courteline and Labiche had seen those films, they would have felt that they had not lived in vain.

Veber's latest, *The Valet*, presents one of his favorite actors (and mine), Daniel Auteuil, as a gonadic billionaire. He promises his gorgeous blonde mistress, Alice Taglioni, that he will get divorced and marry her. But his wife, played by the bilingual English actress Kristin Scott Thomas, owns major interests in the companies he heads, so he has to persuade Madame that Taglioni is not his bedmate, and that in fact she has a boyfriend. Then Auteuil has to find a boyfriend who can be seen with his mistress. He selects a car valet at his favorite restaurant to pose as that boyfriend and persuades him with cash, while he persuades his mistress with promises of marriage. (The valet, played by Gad Elmaleh, is named François Pignon, a name that recurs frequently in Veber scripts just because he likes it. No connection between the various Pignons.) And then Auteuil engages photographers to shoot, from a window across the street, Taglioni and Elmaleh in bed. Though nothing sexual actually happens: the valet is in love with someone else.

Someone else! That puts it mildly. There is plenty else. The synopsis above is a drastic reduction of the plot(s) in *The Valet*. Once in a while, which is too often, the milling about seems enforced rather than driven by the demons of whom Bentley wrote. But there can be no doubt that this film is the work of a man whose very soul is committed to farce.

Auteuil, caroming from mistress to wife, again shows that his versatility is something more than cleverness; it is internal. Elmaleh is unstuffily decent. And Taglioni, as the stunning blonde, is not miscast. ◆

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Paul Berman

WHO'S AFRAID OF TARIQ RAMADAN?

The Islamist, the journalist, and the defense of liberalism.

I.

Tariq Ramadan is a charismatic and energetic Islamic philosopher in Europe who has become popular and influential among various circles of European Muslims during the past fifteen years—originally in Geneva, where his father founded the Islamic Center in 1961; then in Lyon, the French city closest to Switzerland, where Ramadan attracted a following of young people from North African backgrounds; then among French Muslims beyond Lyon; at the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, in Britain, where he spent a year on a fellowship; among still more scattered Muslim audiences in Western Europe, who listened to his audio recordings and packed his lecture halls, normally with the men and the women sitting demurely in their separate sections; among Muslims in various Francophone countries in Africa—and outward to the wider world.

Ramadan possesses a special genius for shaping cultural questions according to his own lights and presenting those questions to the general public, and he has demonstrated this ability from the start. As early as 1993, at the age of thirty-two, he campaigned in Geneva to cancel an impending production of Voltaire's play *Muhammad, or Fanaticism*. The production was canceled, and a star was born—though Ramadan has argued that, on the contrary, he had nothing to do with canceling the play, and to say otherwise is a "pure lie." Not every battle has gone his way. He taught at the college of Saussure, where his colleagues were disturbed by his arguments in favor of Islamic biology over Darwin. This time, too, Ramadan shaped the debate to his own specifications by insisting that he never wanted to suppress the existing biology curriculum—merely to complement it with an additional point of view. A helpful creationist proposal. But the Darwinians, unlike the Voltaireans, were in no rush to yield.

That was in 1995, and by then Ramadan had already established his social base in Lyon, at the Union of Young Muslims and the Tawhid bookstore and publishing house. These were slightly raffish immigrant endeavors, somewhat outside the old and official mainline Muslim organizations in France. Even so, the mainline organizations seem to have welcomed the arrival of a brilliant young philosopher. He built alliances. He attended conferences. His op-eds ran in the newspapers. He engaged in debates. Eventually his face appeared on French television and on the covers of glossy magazines, which introduced him to the general public in France, a huge success. And yet—this is the oddity about Tariq Ramadan—as his triumphs became ever greater, and his thinking came to be more widely known, no consensus whatsoever emerged regarding the nature of his philosophy or its meaning for France, or Europe, or the world.

Some mainstream journalists in France were drawn to him from the start. The Islam-and-secularism correspondent at *Le Monde*, full of admiration, plugged him fairly regularly and sometimes adopted his arguments. At *Le Monde Diplomatique*, he became a cause, not just a story; the editor lionized him. *Politis* magazine promoted him. On the activist far left, some of the anti-globalist radicals and the die-hard enemies of McDonald's looked on Ramadan—because of his denunciations of American imperialism and Zionism and his plebeian agitations in Lyon—as a tribune of progressive Islam, even if his religious severities grated on left-wing sensibilities. The Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Communist League formed something of an alliance with him. A number of Christian activists regarded him with particular fondness: a worthy partner for inter-religious dialogues. A dike against the flood tides of secular materialism. A religiously motivated social conscience similar to their own, laboring on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. Ramadan might even have seemed, in some people's eyes, stylishly trendy at one moment or another—a champion of Islam who, because Islam has been so badly demonized, held out a last dim hope for shocking the bourgeoisie. Then again, some of the French experts on Islam, such as the distinguished scholar Olivier Roy, who had no interest in shocking anyone, likewise found something admirable in him: a thoughtful effort to modernize Islam for a liberal age.

Still, in France other people recoiled, and did so without much hesitation, and recoiled also at the people who had failed to recoil. The critics were thoroughly convinced that Ramadan's friends and admirers and supporters in the press were deluding themselves, and that alliances with him were bound to backfire, and that, beneath the urbane surface, he represented the worst in Islam, not the best. These critics were drawn not only from the Christian conservatives and the political right. The most prominent of his left-wing Christian allies turned against him in a fury, as if betrayed. Some mainline Muslim leaders in France grew reserved. Even the French anti-globalists were of two minds about him. He had his fans, but there were many who watched with dismay as Ramadan's pious followers filled the seats at anti-globalist meetings and veiled women thronged the podium. In France his loudest enemies were left-wing feminists, who took one look and shuddered in alarm. Feminists from Muslim backgrounds denounced him in *Libération*, the left-wing newspaper. The Socialist Party politicians in France, who had every reason to seek out Arab and Muslim voters, showed no interest in him at all.

Dark rumors spread. The Spanish police inquired into his Lyon networks. In 1995 the French minister of the interior denied him permission to re-enter France—which sparked a mobilization of petition-signers until the order was rescinded. His detractors in the press—initially at *Lyon Mag*, the city magazine in Lyon—speculated grimly about his personal connections. He responded with a double lawsuit, against *Lyon Mag* and against one of his critics, the Lebanese historian Antoine Sfeir. The verdict ended up split: against the magazine but in favor of Sfeir. The magazine kept on hammering nonetheless.

Books about Ramadan tumbled into the bookstores at a remarkable pace. Caroline Fourest's *Frère Tariq*, or *Brother Tariq*, which appeared in 2004, has been

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the most influential—an angry book, alarmed, energetic in tabulating the naïve tropes and clichés of the French press, indignant at the journalists who keep falling for the same manipulations, indignant at the progressives who view Ramadan as progressive. But hers was only the first, followed by six more books in the last three or four years—among them Paul Landau's *Le Sabre et le Coran*, or *The Saber and the Qur'an*, in 2005 (no less hostile and accusatory than Fourest's); Aziz Zemouri's *Faut-il Faire Taire Tariq Ramadan*?, or *Should Tariq Ramadan Be Silenced?*, the same year (which affords Ramadan the chance to have his own say); and Ian Hamel's *La vérité sur Tariq Ramadan*, or *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan*, this year (mildly sympathetic to Ramadan, sometimes skeptical, indignant at the hostility expressed by Fourest and Landau). And the books, too, having contributed to the controversy, contributed to his popularity.

Ramadan seems to have known instinctively how to respond to accusations and innuendos, and his rejoinders succeeded in turning every new setback into an advance. He suggested a bigotry against Islam on his critics' part, amounting to a kind of racism. He argued that criticisms of him represented a holdover from the colonialist mentality of the past. He was angry, dignified, self-controlled, and unmovable. The combination of his replies and his demeanor proved effective in the conscience-stricken atmosphere of modern postimperial France. A good many people, listening to his rejoinders, grew pensive. His supporters waved their fists. And his critics became ever more fretful—not just at Ramadan, but at the people who, in applauding or merely in growing pensive, seemed to have accepted his categories of analysis, as if in a stupor.

His entrance into the Anglophone world began quietly. The Islamic Foundation in Leicester, where Ramadan studied and wrote in 1996–1997, enjoys the distinction of having been the first and most vigorous Muslim institution in Britain to rally against Salman Rushdie back in 1988, even before Ayatollah Khomeini issued his religious decree authorizing Rushdie's assassination. The foundation published Ramadan's book *To Be a European Muslim* in 1999, and it enjoyed a modest success. *To Be a European Muslim* was regarded as a thoughtful argument for healthy new relations between old-stock non-Muslim Europe and the new-stock immigrant Muslim population. Daniel Pipes in the United States was among the expert observers who offered applause—though, if you visit Pipes's website, you will see that, ever since his initial review, Pipes has been posting additional remorseful observations about how wrong he was, and what could possibly have gotten into him? (You will also see that Ramadan, for his part, together with a sympathetic journalist or two, has promoted Pipes into the center of an anti-Ramadan conspiracy on behalf of the Jews.)

In 2001, the Islamic Foundation published Ramadan's *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity*, a philosophical text that attracted less attention. Even so, controversy went on working its wonders, and in faraway Indiana the University of Notre Dame offered him a professorship beginning in 2004—partly funded, as it happens, by the Kroc family, which means the McDonald's fortune. Ramadan accepted. He obtained a visa. He arranged for his family to move. Then, at the last minute, Homeland Security balked, and the State Department revoked his visa. The ACLU, PEN, and a couple of academic organizations rallied to his defense, as was their duty. But the man was barred, which generated still more publicity, some of it hostile, of course, but much of it sympathetic, as was only natural—a feeling of outrage on his behalf, an exasperation at American provincialism, a fearful recollection of the obtuse McCarthyite xenophobia of yore. Anyway, America's nay triggered a British yea. St. Antony's College at Oxford stepped in with its own offer of a fellowship for 2005. Ramadan accepted.

TO BE A EUROPEAN MUSLIM
By Tariq Ramadan
(Islamic Foundation, 273 pp., $19.95)

ISLAM, THE WEST, AND THE CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY
By Tariq Ramadan
(Islamic Foundation, 352 pp., $35)

WESTERN MUSLIMS AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAM
By Tariq Ramadan
(Oxford University Press, 272 pp., $16.95)

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PROPHET: LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF MUHAMMAD
By Tariq Ramadan
(Oxford University Press, 242 pp., $23)

The London terrorist attack took place in July of that year. The Blair government organized an advisory commission afterward to make suitable recommendations. Ramadan was invited to participate. He accepted. And with one incident piling atop the next—the defeats, the victories—he was lifted, at last, to the pinnacle of American journalistic recognition: the sort of full-length profile and full-page photograph in *The New York Times Magazine* that half the writers and intellectuals of Europe dream of receiving one day, in the hope of realizing the impossible, which is to break into the American bookstores and the American conversation.

No popular magazine in the United States has done more in the last few years to illuminate the intellectual life of the Muslim world than *The New York Times Magazine*—always in a serious manner, never flippantly, always with major sources behind the journalism, always at full length. In this instance, the *Times* magazine assigned its profile to the well-known journalist Ian Buruma, and this was an impeccable choice. Buruma published a book last year called *Murder in Amsterdam*, on the assassination of the Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh by an Islamist fanatic—and the book testified to Buruma's expertise on Islamist dangers in Europe. Three years ago, Buruma and the Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit joined forces to write a book called *Occidentalism*, on the historical appeal of European fascist and other anti-liberal doctrines to people outside Europe, and this book testified to Buruma's expertise on wayward and totalitarian ideologies as well: a pertinent credential. Buruma produced his profile. The *Times* magazine published it in February—though, because of the European controversy that has broken out during the last few months over Buruma's journalism, the profile has lingered in the public eye, and not just in Europe. The profile bore the amusing title "Tariq Ramadan Has an Identity Issue." You can find it on the *New York Times* website.

The profile affected a quizzical tone. Buruma seemed bemused by his difficulties in pinning his subject down—his difficulties even in arranging for an interview, though he did finally get one. Buruma dutifully rehearsed some of the political accusations that have been leveled at Ramadan in France, in their

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more generalized versions at least—dark rumors, feminist shudders, instinctive suspicions. In Buruma's judgment, one accusation after another turned out to be groundless; or exaggerated and unjust; or distorted because the context had been omitted. Or Buruma expressed no opinion of his own and, out of courtesy, permitted Ramadan to rebut his critics; and the rebuttals seemed firm, or at least plausible, even if Buruma now and then raised a skeptical eyebrow.

He marveled over Ramadan's mix of anti-globalist fervor and ultra-conservative cultural views. "In American terms," Buruma remarked, "he is a Noam Chomsky on foreign policy and a Jerry Falwell on social affairs." Yet Buruma seemed to look on Ramadan much more warmly than any comparisons to Chomsky and Falwell might suggest. He explained that last year the French magazine *Le Point* invited him to debate Ramadan and, in the hope of seeing sparks fly, urged him to be aggressive. The debate took place. Ramadan was unflappable. The discussion failed to stumble across any serious differences at all. "We agreed on most issues," Buruma wrote, "and even when we didn't (he was more friendly toward the pope than I was), our 'debate' refused to catch fire"—which is a debate summary that, in its affability, is hard to imagine if Buruma had come face-to-face with Chomsky or Falwell on a public platform. "We agreed on most issues"—no, this would have been an unlikely result of any encounter with the anti-imperialist from MIT or the late evangelist of the Christian right.

All in all, Buruma judged that, despite the controversies and accusations, Ramadan the philosopher offers, in Buruma's words, "a reasoned but traditionalist approach to Islam" based on "values that are as universal as those of the European Enlightenment." He judged that Ramadan's values, although "neither secular, nor always liberal," offer "an alternative to violence, which is, in the end, reason enough to engage with him, critically, but without fear." This was not quite a ringing endorsement. Still, it was an endorsement. It conveyed the unmistakable implication that Ramadan, the worthy interlocutor, stands for more than himself, which is why engaging him might be useful—in order to discover the human and philosophical principles that Western and Muslim hearts and minds might share in common, and to bridge the divisions, and at last to achieve, between the West and Islam, a cultural peace: the goals that every reasonable person yearns to see achieved, even if not everybody would assent too quickly to a vision of the world that consigns the West to one corner and Islam to another.

TOMASZ WALENTA

Such were the conclusions in the *Times* magazine. They were tempered. But they were confident. And here, in a single full-length magazine profile, the entire well-established heap of European journalistic platitudes about Ramadan that Caroline Fourest had catalogued and deplored three years ago in France smoothly glided into American print, as if landing at the airport. Nor was Buruma left standing alone with his luggage of views and evaluations. *The New York Review of Books* had already published an essay by Timothy Garton Ash, who is Ramadan's colleague at St. Antony's College. Garton Ash lavished praise on Buruma and, in passing, applauded Ramadan, too, precisely along Buruma's lines, except without the cautionary notes. This spring, Oxford University Press published Ramadan's latest book in English, a biography of the Prophet Muhammad called *In the Footsteps of the Prophet. The New York Times Book Review* assigned the book to Stéphanie Giry, an editor of *Foreign Affairs*—a journalist who, like Buruma, has contributed to The New Republic. Giry in her review went so far as to invoke the authority of Buruma's profile in the *Times* magazine, and she followed his argument almost to the letter.

It is not entirely obvious to me that Buruma has read very much by Ramadan, nor that Stéphanie Giry has read more than a single book, though she has met the man. As for Garton Ash, he confesses in his *New York Review* essay that he bases his judgment on having heard Ramadan speak, which may suggest that he has read nothing by Ramadan at all. But no matter: a conventional wisdom has plainly convened. And in this fashion Tariq Ramadan, by acquiring a brilliant fame and refracting its rays in one country after another, has succeeded in brightly illuminating two very different, murky, and related developments during the last few years: a large new development among select circles of pious Muslims in Europe, and not just in Europe; and an equally new and still more remarkable development among the normally impious journalists and intellectuals of Europe and America.

II.

Tariq Ramadan is nothing if not a son and a brother and, especially, a grandson, not to mention a great-grandson—family relations that shape everything he writes and does, or at least the perception of what he writes and does, which is an unusual fate for a writer on philosophical themes. His grandfather was Hassan al-Banna, born in Egypt in 1906 and assassinated by the Egyptian political police in 1949—a man who has cast a big shadow over modern events. At a very young age, Hassan al-Banna conceived a genuinely original project for the Muslim world, or at least a partly original one, as is always the case with new ideas. He gazed back on some late nineteenth-century thinkers—on Muhammad Abduh (under whom al-Banna's father, Ramadan's great-grandfather, studied at Al-Azhar University) and on Abduh's mentor and colleague Jamal al-Din al-Afghani. These were people who had wanted to overthrow the European colonizers—and at the same time to modernize the Islamic world. They wanted to join reason to faith, tradition to modernity, the Islamic achievements of the ancient past to the European breakthroughs of their own age. They called for an Islamic rejuvenation that was going to return to the pristine seventh-century, or "salafi," roots of Islam, while retaining a spirit of innovation—which made sense on the ground that, back in the seventh century, Islam itself was forcefully innovative.

Maybe there was something ambiguous in those nineteenth-century ideas. It has even been suggested that al-Afghani was never entirely sincere about his religious convictions, and used Islam for rhetorical purposes. Then again, the nineteenth-century ambitions and ambiguities ought to seem recognizable enough. In several places around the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—in Latin America, in India, in China—nationalist-minded intellectuals labored earnestly to bring their own autochthonous traditions together with European and North American innovations, in the hope of overthrowing the imperialists. That was an irresistible idea in those days. It is still an irresistible idea. But how to accomplish any of this was never really obvious. Hassan al-Banna's suggestion in the 1920s and 1930s was to convert the proposed seventh-century-and-modern

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Islamic revival into a forward-looking political force of a particular sort. He glanced at a few of the European breakthroughs of his own time, which meant the extreme-right political movements of the 1920s–1940s, whose doctrines he was happy to borrow so long as he could adapt them to his own purposes. And in 1928, with these several wispy inspirations beginning to solidify in his imagination, he founded the Muslim Brotherhood.

The organization was minuscule. It grew. It became a political force—though the Muslim Brotherhood was always many other things as well: rigorously pious and observant, intellectually vigorous, educationally and culturally active, earnestly welfare-oriented, athletics-oriented (the Boy Scouts were a direct influence), secretly paramilitary (although cautious and legal-minded in appearance), and not above staging the occasional assassination. Ultimately, al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood was revolutionary in the name of a Qur'anic utopia—the Brotherhood's politicized vision of returning to the salafi seventh century, as adjusted for the modern age. And yet the Brotherhood was patient and even eager to endure the greatest of sufferings, given that utopia was eternal and did not have to arrive tomorrow. Al-Banna's Brotherhood was, in short, the original model for what has come to be known as "Islamism"—with the "-ism" trailing after Islam in order to distinguish Islam itself, the ancient religion, from the modern political, and more than political, tendency that al-Banna brought into the world.

The Muslim Brotherhood spread from Egypt to Syria, Palestine, Sudan, and other places, and its inspiration spread even to Iran (via the Shiite variation of al-Banna's idea elaborated by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and Ali Shariati) and India and Pakistan (via a sister movement founded independently by Abul Ala Mawdudi, al-Banna's South Asian counterpart) and beyond. In a small way, the Brotherhood even spread to Europe, under the leadership of al-Banna's secretary and son-in-law, Said Ramadan, who became Tariq Ramadan's father. Said Ramadan was a loyal lieutenant—he was "the little Hassan al-Banna"—and as a very young man he took on some big responsibilities. Said Ramadan was in charge of spreading the Muslim Brotherhood's message to Palestine (where he fought in 1948 in the war against Israel) and to Pakistan (where he coordinated affairs with Mawdudi's sister movement). And Said Ramadan published a monthly magazine, *Al-Muslimun*, which introduced Mawdudi's ideas to the Arabic public. In 1954, the Egyptian government under Nasser suppressed the Brotherhood and threw its leaders and a great many other people in jail, but Said Ramadan, having already done a month in prison, happened to be in Jerusalem at the crucial moment, and he escaped the crackdown. Then he fled from pillar to post in the Arab world, to Germany, and finally to faraway Geneva, where he founded his Islamic Center and settled his family. He started up *Al-Muslimun* again. Until his death, in 1995, Said Ramadan persisted in his proselytizing labors among the Muslims of Western Europe.

The number of people all over the world who have come to look on the Muslim Brotherhood and its Islamist legacies with ardent veneration has by now become immeasurably vast, and this is true nowadays even in Western Europe. The Muslim population in Western Europe numbered less than one million in the 1950s, but it has lately swelled to something like twenty million, though no one seems to have exact figures—and this means that, in the eyes of huge numbers of European Muslims, a more glorious ancestry than Tariq Ramadan's does not exist. Ramadan himself, Swiss-born and Swiss-educated, has always exulted in his family legacy, sometimes humbly, sometimes arrogantly; sometimes presuming the right to speak for his long-gone revered grandfather; sometimes carrying himself with the wounded air of a man who, through his father, knows in the flesh the meaning of persecution and suffering.

And yet Tariq Ramadan's august background generates, all by itself, still more controversy, and has done so from the very start. At the University of Geneva, Ramadan wrote his thesis on his grandfather's ideas—and his committee judged the work to be a partisan apologia, unworthy of commendation. Ramadan protested. A Swiss Socialist rose to his defense, and a second committee was convened, a rare occurrence. Even then, the thesis was accepted without honors. This was an academic dispute, but also more than academic. And it has never gone away. It is a dispute over the meaning of Hassan al-Banna's Islamic revival and its political and cultural legacies for today and not just the past—a dispute over whether al-Banna's movement ought to be regarded as a progressive force, in spite of every complaint or reservation that could be lodged. Or is there something in al-Banna's legacy that ought to worry us unto panic?

Everyone knows by now that Al Qaeda can trace its roots to a splinter tendency within the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during the 1960s and even earlier, and this history raises an awkward question, which Ramadan has had to answer more than once in the years since September 11. He answered the question one more time in Buruma's *Times* magazine profile in February. He acknowledged that, yes, Al Qaeda emerged from the Muslim Brotherhood. But not from Grandfather al-Banna's legacy. Al Qaeda drew its inspiration, instead, from Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), who enlisted in the Muslim Brotherhood only after al-Banna's assassination. About al-Banna and Qutb, Ramadan said, "They didn't even know each other"—which is true, narrowly speaking. Buruma quoted the remark and had every reason to do so (though it was odd of him not to mention how misleading was Ramadan's observation, seen from a broader angle—a point to which I will return). Still, Buruma did go on to quote Ramadan's account of his grandfather's un-Qutb-like political goals. Al-Banna, in Ramadan's phrase, "was in favor of a British-style parliamentary system, which was not against Islam."

This second observation, though—is it equally correct, from a narrowly factual angle? In the *Times* magazine, Buruma elected to be wryly noncommittal. "This may or may not be an accurate representation of Hassan al-Banna," he observed—which is the mark of Buruma's charm as a writer, his gift for understatement and indirection. Even so, understated indirection is not always the best way to inform the public. He might have pointed out that Ramadan, in his book *Aux Sources du Renouveau Musulman*, or *The Roots of the Muslim Revival*, in 1998, devotes some two hundred pages to al-Banna and his visionary ideas. Ramadan concedes that al-Banna did want to replace the multi-party system in Egypt with a single national council, which might appear to be a one-party state—but Ramadan explains that, because of the fundamentally democratic nature of Islam, al-Banna's proposal was tantamount to a multi-party system. Such is the interpretation in *The Roots of the Muslim Revival*. And Buruma might have pointed out one of the principal alternative interpretations of al-Banna and his ideas, if only to offer a little perspective on Ramadan and his way of thinking. According to this second interpretation, al-Banna is best described as a fascist.

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This is used to be a fairly common judgment on the Arab left, not to mention among European Marxists—maybe in some cases because "fascist" is every left-winger's favorite insult, and for no larger reason. Still, something called "clerico-fascism" (to use the traditional term) is an old concept on the left, dating back to the 1920s in Italy, where it used to refer to the militant wing of the Catholic extreme right. And the applicability of that sort of label to al-Banna's new movement in Egypt did seem, at least to some people in the past, hard to miss—an obvious applicability based on the populism and demagogic emotionalism of the Muslim Brotherhood, together with its authoritarianism, intolerance, violence, invasiveness, and a certain kind of giddy twentieth-century-style utopianism, not to mention some of the direct influences that wended across the Mediterranean Sea from fascism's original home in Europe. Then, too, in the eyes of a fair number of scholarly and journalistic observers today, a fascist label, or some reasonably similar term, seems faintly applicable—or more than faintly—even now.

You can see a sophisticated political-theory presentation of this analysis in the writings of Bassam Tibi, the Syrian-German scholar, though in regard to al-Banna and his legacies, Tibi, in his precision, prefers the loftier Arendtian word "totalitarian" (which, anyway, was coined by Mussolini) to the label "fascist" (likewise coined by Mussolini). A discussion of al-Banna's fascism turns up repeatedly in the current literature on Tariq Ramadan. Paul Landau, in *The Saber and the Qur'an*, describes al-Banna, in his position as chief guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, as a figure comparable to Il Duce and the Führer. Landau attributes a lot of importance to al-Banna's friendship with Haj Amin al-Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem—who, as Hitler's ally, helped organize a Muslim division of the Waffen-SS and then, after the war, when he was wanted for war crimes (owing to his SS division), succeeded in escaping to Egypt, thanks to help from al-Banna himself. Ian Hamel reprises Landau's point about al-Banna and the mufti of Jerusalem in *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan*—though Hamel's purpose is normally to knock down everything said by Landau, if he can. Even Hamel describes al-Banna as a man with a "totalitarian organization and an extremist program."

Caroline Fourest offers a more striking observation in *Brother Tariq* by pointing to al-Banna's *Epistle to the Young*. The epistle lays out, under the six clauses of his slogan ("God is our goal; the Prophet is our guide; the Qur'an is our constitution; struggle is our way; death on the path of God is our ultimate desire; God is great, God is great"), the five stages of his program. To wit: the creation of a properly Muslim individual person, in thought and belief; of a properly Muslim family; of a properly Muslim people or community; of an Islamic state; and, finally, the resurrection of the ancient Islamic Empire—which al-Banna describes by referring admiringly to what he calls the "German Reich" and to Mussolini's dream of a resurrected Roman Empire, though naturally al-Banna regards his own resurrected Islamic Empire as vastly preferable and theologically more legitimate than anything Mussolini could have contemplated.

Tariq Ramadan by Lara Tomlin
for The New Republic

Back in the early 1940s, the British authorities in Egypt took this sort of sentiment seriously enough and, in the hope of avoiding anything resembling the pro-Axis coup d'état that took place in Iraq in 1941, presided over al-Banna's arrest more than once. But the pointed aspect of Fourest's discussion of al-Banna and his *Epistle* lies in her observation that Ramadan, in presenting the *Epistle* in one of his own popular audio recordings, has omitted the fascist references—which raises anew the question about forthrightness.

Among the present-day commentaries on al-Banna and fascism that I have lately stumbled on, the most eye-opening turns up in an essay by the Iranian scholars Ladan Boroumand and Roya Boroumand, which appears in an anthology called *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*, edited by Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Daniel Brumberg. The Boroumands (who are sisters) arrive at a grim evaluation: "The man who did more than any other to lend an Islamic cast to totalitarian ideology was an Egyptian schoolteacher named Hassan al-Banna." By "totalitarian ideology," the Boroumand sisters have in mind the doctrines of the Italian Fascists and the German Nazis, whose influence on al-Banna they underline. And they point out the disastrous consequences: "From the Fascists—and behind them, from the European tradition of putatively 'transformative' or 'purifying' revolutionary violence that began with the Jacobins—Banna also borrowed the idea of heroic death as a political art form."

There is nothing especially novel or bizarre in noticing that al-Banna displayed an eager interest in the aesthetic cult of death. The classic history of the Muslim Brotherhood, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, by Richard P. Mitchell, which appeared in 1969, was quite lucid on this topic even then. Al-Banna came up with a double phrase about the importance of death as a goal of jihad—"the art of death" (*fann al-mawt*) and "death is art" (*al-mawt fann*). This phrase became, in Mitchell's description, a famous part of al-Banna's legacy. Stringing together his own paraphrases with al-Banna's words, Mitchell wrote: "The Qur'an has commanded people to love death more than life" (which, I might add, is a phrase that we have heard more than once in terrorist statements during the last few years, for instance in the videotape that was made by the Islamist group that attacked Madrid in 2004). And al-Banna continued, in Mitchell's presentation: "Unless the philosophy of the Qur'an on death replaces the love of life which has consumed Muslims, they will reach naught. Victory can only come with the mastery of the art of death."

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But what might strike some people as novel or controversial is the Boroumand sisters' observation that al-Banna borrowed these grisly ideas from Europe, instead of deriving them, as al-Banna himself claimed to have done, from Qur'anic tradition. Hassan al-Banna, seen in this light, did something dreadful to Islam. He founded the modern vogue for suicide terror—the cult of death as political art form par excellence—and he attached this cult to Islam. This interpretation of al-Banna corresponds to Bassam Tibi's view, though Tibi emphasizes that al-Banna served mostly to clear the way for Sayyid Qutb, and it was Qutb who played the crucial role.

Ian Buruma, as a co-author of *Occidentalism*, is a student of fascism's influence outside of Europe, which means that he does know something about these several arguments and points, and the knowledge at his fingertips must surely have contributed to his skeptical response in the *Times* magazine to Ramadan's description of his grandfather—though Buruma tactfully refrained from sharing any of this information with his readers. Buruma did remark that Ramadan's description of al-Banna tells us "a lot about the way Ramadan presents himself." But what does it tell us? In the *Times* magazine, Buruma confined himself to observing that Ramadan is a builder of bridges, someone who sets about "reconciling what seems hard to reconcile," and he confirmed the point by quoting a professor at Notre Dame who praises Ramadan for "trying to bridge a divide and bring together people of diverse backgrounds and worldviews"—all of which does sound wonderful, though only so long as everyone agrees not to mention or describe some of the worldviews being bridged.

III.

But these are questions from a couple of generations ago, and Ramadan is not his grandfather, nor does he appear to be an agent of his grandfather's organization (though both Fourest and Landau do take him to be an agent of the Muslim Brotherhood). "What is past is past," as the Qur'an says more than once. And the past cannot tell us what Ramadan has been trying to achieve in the present. His own ideas and intentions—where do they point, finally? That is what everyone has wanted to know during the last dozen years or so. In the *Times* magazine, Buruma put it directly: "What does he stand for?" And, having asked, he stood aside to allow Ramadan to respond, and Ramadan used the opportunity to speak about philosophical principles.

He stands, he explained, for "universal values" that are in line with the European Enlightenment. He stands for a rationalism seeded by doubt, though Ramadan prefers to invoke these concepts and beliefs by citing the wisdom of Islamic philosophers instead of their European counterparts. "Doubt did not begin with Descartes," Ramadan instructed Buruma. "We have this construction today that the West and Islam are entirely separate worlds. This is wrong. Everything I am doing now, speaking of connections, intersections, universal values we have in common, this was already there in history." So he stands for the commonalities linking the West and Islam—for the values that everyone ought to share, except that, in his version, he prefers to give these values an Islamic inflection.

His response is philosophically reasonable and historically defensible, given the medieval sages and the influences of Aristotle this way and that. On the other hand, it is worth asking why anyone should care about what was "already there in history," in Ramadan's phrase. Why bother with historical chronologies or with the matter of whether Descartes came first? These are not trick questions. There might be some obvious answers: to remind the hubristic and anti-Muslim Western publics of Muslim contributions to world civilization. Or to hearten the many publics of the Muslim world, who may feel a little discouraged and beset. Or simply to draw an accurate timeline of the history of ideas, which would be valuable in itself.

Then again, if Ramadan means to suggest, by pointing to Islamic thinkers of the Middle Ages, that ancient roots are everything; or that science and rationality come in different versions depending on one's origins, a version for Muslims and a different version for everyone else; or that universalism itself comes in different versions, and my universalism may not be the same as yours, and truth varies from culture to culture—then, of course, further questions arise. The notion that science and rationality come in different versions is an old idea: it is the notion that, taken to a logical conclusion, led the Nazis to suppose that physics came in an Aryan version and in a Jewish version, which were not identical, even if Jewish physics and Aryan physics appeared to be identical; and led the Stalinists to suppose that proletarian science was one thing and bourgeois science another, in spite of every superficial resemblance; and so on. This kind of argument is not hard to stumble across in Islamist literature: the notion that science comes in a Western version and also in an Islamic version, which are not the same. The same idea re-appears today in a sweet-tempered postmodern variation, as a kind of multiculturalism taken to the nth degree, in which every culture is pictured as equivalent and unique, and each culture's claims to universal principles ought to be taken with a grain of salt, as an agreeable rhetoric that probably does not mean very much.

So, then, where does Ramadan stand on these philosophical matters? Buruma did not inquire any further, but Ian Hamel does pose the question in *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan*. Hamel provides a number of isolated quotations suggesting that Ramadan draws a careful line between religious outlooks and scientific ones; and that he does know that medicine is medicine, regardless of its origins; and that his notion of universality is genuinely universal. But it is hard to judge the significance of those quotations when they are removed from their original context. In *The Roots of the Muslim Revival* Ramadan presents a quotation that makes al-Banna himself appear to have entertained a lucid and un-fascist view of natural science. But then again, in *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity* Ramadan finally makes plain that, in his own view, Muslim universalism is not, in fact, the same as Western universalism, and Muslim reasoning, with its acknowledgment of doubt, is not the same as Western reasoning, with its own acknowledgment of doubt. This might explain why Ramadan regards biology education as merely an education in Western biology, which ought to be supplemented by a bit of Islamic biology (though I might add that in the Islamist literature there is a deeper argument against Darwin, which Qutb presents, drawing on Alexis Carrel, the French Vichy intellectual). In any case, Ramadan does believe that Islam and the West are separate—even cosmically separate. At least he appears to believe this in *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity*. "We are indeed dealing with two different universes of reference," he writes, "two civilizations and two cultures."

On the topic of rational doubt and Descartes, he invokes the medieval philosopher al-Ghazali, who, in Ramadan's interpretation, proposed arguments that anticipated Descartes by several hundred years. This must be what Ramadan had in mind in pointing out to Buruma that

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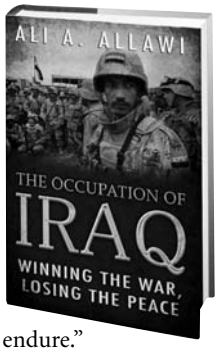

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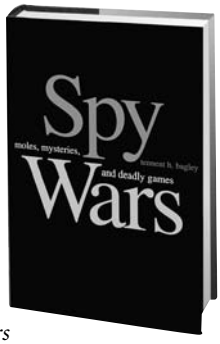

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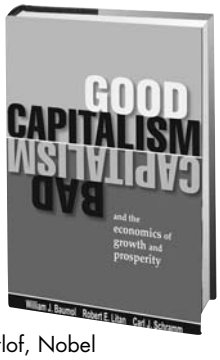
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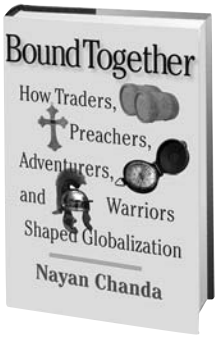

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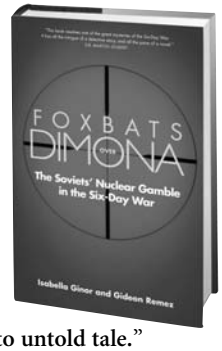

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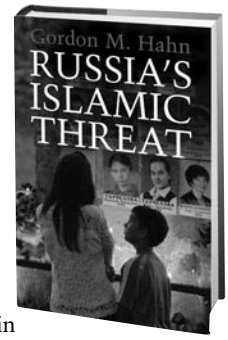

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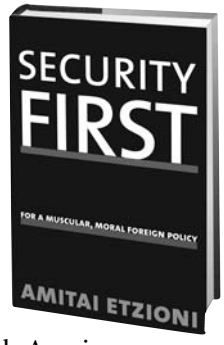

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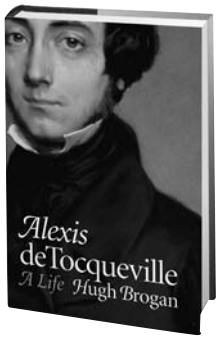

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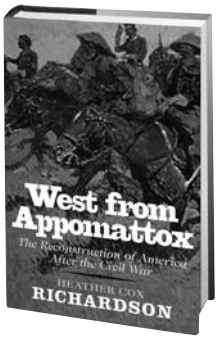

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"doubt did not begin with Descartes." But in *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity* he goes into more detail, and the details suggest that al-Ghazali's notion of doubt points in one direction and Descartes' in another—an observation that accords with al-Ghazali's reputation as the medieval philosopher who issued the most formidable challenge to high Islamic rationalism. About al-Ghazali, Ramadan writes, "At first, we can find innumerable correspondences between his thought and that of Descartes. Such correspondences certainly exist, but the frame of reference which gives the solution to going beyond doubt is fundamentally different."

In Ramadan's view, ancient Greek influences on Islam have never allowed for the kind of tension or difference between the sacred and the non-sacred that exists in Western thought. The ancient Greek influences on Islam have never allowed for a Promethean spirit of rebellion, and have never allowed for a sense of the tragic. That is because in Islam, as per Ramadan (and here he invokes the medieval philosopher Ibn Taymiyya), the zone of the sacred contains only a single concept, which is *tawhid*, or the oneness of God. *Tawhid* leaves no room for tensions, rebellions, or doubts. A deep and tragic sense of doubt is not even a conceptual possibility. Buruma in the *Times* magazine pursued this philosophical matter sufficiently at least to ask Ramadan if he has "ever experienced any doubts himself." Ramadan replied: "Doubts about God, no." And Buruma seems not to have realized that, in responding with this easy certainty, Ramadan was surely offering more than a self-confident autobiographical observation. Doubt, in Ramadan's interpretation, can exist only within the limits allowed by *tawhid*—meaning that, for a proper Muslim, doubts about God are literally inconceivable. A Muslim, in Ramadan's formulation, may forget, but a Muslim cannot doubt.

Ramadan's harsher critics would argue that in speaking to Buruma the way he did on these abstract and historical questions, not to mention on his grandfather's ideals, he was cagily deploying a "double discourse"—a language intended to deceive Western liberals about the grain of his own thought. An accusation of "double discourse" has dogged Ramadan for many years in France. It is a chief complaint against him, and a big source of anxiety among his critics. Fourest, in *Brother Tariq*, documents what appears to be rather a lot of "double discourse," instances in which Ramadan appears to have said one thing to the general public and something else to his Muslim audiences. Landau, in *The Saber and the Qur'an*, offers his own documentation. On the other hand, Hamel, in *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan*, will have none of this. Hamel is a Swiss journalist from a Moroccan background, and he does seem to have listened to a great many speeches and audio recordings by Ramadan, and to have conducted many interviews, and generally to be more at ease in Ramadan's European Muslim environment than Fourest and Landau appear to be; and he earnestly believes that Fourest and Landau, in their animosity, have wrongly allowed themselves to think the worst.

And yet what are we to do, in that event, with the expansive puddle of footnoted documentation that lies at the bottom of Fourest's pages, and the additional puddle at the bottom of Landau's? I have no way to resolve this quandary, except to hazard a guess that all these writers, friend and foe alike, may have arrived at a truth. Islam, in Ramadan's view of it, is a comprehensive system that takes in the universe, and the comprehensive quality allows him—requires him—to view each new thing in an Islamic light, as if from on high. I think that, from his lofty Islamic heights, he ends up speaking in a naturally dialectical language, secular (in a style descending from both Descartes and al-Ghazali) and at the same time Islamic (in a style descending from al-Ghazali alone). Ramadan's outlook allows him to speak on a level that is true and on a level that is truer; and sometimes the two levels are the same. Is there something deliberately deceptive in this way of going about things? Some people are bound to think so. And yet someone else, more willing to grant the presuppositions, might conclude that Ramadan has stayed reasonably consistent all the while, and, if some people cannot make sense of him, that is the fault of his undialectical listeners.

I would suppose that, in the case of Buruma and *The New York Times Magazine*, Ramadan might have figured that if the journalist required on-the-spot instruction into the deeper meanings of words such as "doubt" in their al-Ghazalian and Cartesian contexts, this was not up to Tariq Ramadan. Nor was it Ramadan's obligation to explain how Grandfather al-Banna's intention to abolish the multi-party system was perfectly compatible with British-style parliamentarism, given the democratic nature of Islam. I would imagine that from Ramadan's perspective, with his notion of "two different universes of reference, two civilizations and two cultures," there was not much point in spelling out every last nuance to the cordial journalist, especially since, in his books, Ramadan has already done so. Some things may be ambiguous, but nothing is secret. Besides, Ramadan is generally not in the business of making enemies. If the correspondent from *The New York Times Magazine* was intent on coming away from their debates and discussions with a feeling that, in Buruma's phrase, "we agreed on most issues"—hey, how wonderful! Why pick a fight?

IV.

Ramadan's various opinions and interpretations ought not to be conflated with Islam itself—and this point, as I have learned from experience, requires emphasis, and even double emphasis. When I wrote about Ramadan some years ago, I noticed that all too many non-Muslim readers are quick to seize on any disagreeable or troubling statement by a Muslim thinker and pin it on Islam as a whole—even if these readers are warned not to do anything of the sort. So I stress the point. Nor does Ramadan himself claim to be speaking for every last Muslim on the planet. He identifies several modern currents of Islamic thought or Muslim self-identification, even apart from the ancient denominations that have transfixed everybody's attention right now, and he knows that all these currents do not accord with one another. In the *Times* magazine, Buruma very properly asked Ramadan to specify which of the currents is his own, and Ramadan answered with a simple phrase. His own current of Islamic thought is the one that goes under the paradoxical-sounding label of "salafi reformist."

Which means? Buruma came up with a definition by plucking a sentence out of Ramadan's *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. A "salafi reformist," Buruma explained, quoting Ramadan's book, is someone who aims at the following goals: "to protect the Muslim identity and religious practice, to recognize the Western constitutional structure, to become involved as a citizen at the social level, and to live with true loyalty to the country to which one belongs." This quotation is accurate, in a fashion—I have located it on page 27 of Ramadan's book, as well as in a slightly different setting in *To Be a European Muslim*—but, then again, less than accurate because of the way that Buruma has severed the quoted words from some other remarks on the same page and the previous one.

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Taken by themselves, the quoted words make salafi reformism sound like an earnest and slightly dowdy do-good effort to adapt Islam to the modern liberal world. But that is a mistake. It is an old mistake, too, that journalists persist in making, as both Fourest and Landau point out with a lot of exasperation in their respective books. In a footnote on the topic of "reformism" in his book *The Roots of the Muslim Revival*, back in 1998, Ramadan himself halfway acknowledges the potential for misunderstanding, though he thinks he is justified in using the term anyway.

Salafi reformism, in his usage, signifies something precise, which has nothing to do with liberal reformism in the conventional sense. Buruma asked Ramadan to list his two favorite Muslim philosophers. Ramadan duly named Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh—the late nineteenth-century figures whom Ramadan regards as the progenitors of Hassan al-Banna's Islamic revival and the Muslim Brotherhood (though other people would insist rather sharply that al-Banna's Islamism, in its radicalism and rigidity, departed fundamentally from those nineteenth-century thinkers). Anyway, not many readers of the *Times* magazine are likely to have recognized these nineteenth-century names. And yet if Buruma had thought to ask Ramadan about some more recent thinkers in the salafi reformist mode, Ramadan could have gone on listing names, and some of those additional names would, in fact, be recognizable to a good many readers. Ramadan has already listed the names in *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*—has done this, as it happens, in the paragraph directly preceding the one from which Buruma has plucked his misleading definition.

Here, on page 26, is Hassan al-Banna; and Abul Ala Mawdudi from the South Asian subcontinent, whose activities Tariq's father, Said Ramadan, coordinated with the Muslim Brotherhood; and Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Khomeini's fellow thinker in Iran. And here is Sayyid Qutb, one more influential reformist among the others, listed without comment—even if Qutb's legacy, in one of its offshoots, did lead to Al Qaeda. In Ramadan's usage, salafi reformism turns out to be the philosophical underpinning for modern Islamism in the sundry versions that descend from al-Banna's (and Mawdudi's) original idea. Naturally, these sundry versions do not always chime with one another, and this, too, Ramadan carefully spells out. In *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, he divides the descendants of the original reformist idea into subcurrents or tendencies—though in order to distinguish among these tendencies, you have to inspect his account rather closely, unto the fine print, meaning the footnotes. And this kind of close inspection is worth undertaking, not just to shed a little light on Ramadan's philosophy but also to cast an extra glance at the related but different theme of Ramadan's image in the press.

So, then, the subcurrents of salafi reformism, as per Tariq Ramadan. One of these subcurrents turns out to be his own: the outspokenly Western variant, the version whose particularities Ramadan defines with the attractive language that Buruma has mistakenly applied to the entire movement—a language of preserving Muslim identity and becoming loyal citizens of democratic countries. Ramadan's subcurrent is not the principal one, however. The principal subcurrent flourishes only in the Muslim world (and, in Ramadan's book, only in the footnotes)—though "flourishes" may give the wrong impression, since, as he observes with a touch of bitterness, the organizations and movements within this subcurrent "are almost everywhere, though in different degrees, subjected to imprisonment, torture, and persecution." Plainly, Ramadan is writing here about the Muslim Brotherhood, together with (I suppose) its several national and sectarian variations and offshoots—the Muslim Brotherhood in the Muslim countries themselves, where martyrdom has come to figure as part of the movement's identity. The intention of this, the most prominent current of the salafi reformists, is fully revolutionary: it is to establish an Islamic society.

And then, in his honesty, Ramadan somewhat ruefully cites still another subcurrent that flows from the salafi reformist source—though, in his view, this final tendency has emptied salafi reformism of almost all of its original content. This final tendency, he tells us, has gone over to "strictly political activism," joined to "a literalist reading" of the sacred texts, leading to "radical revolutionary action." Ramadan describes this tendency as "political literalist Salafism"—which Buruma in the *Times* magazine mentions by name, though without identifying it as an offshoot of the salafi reformist idea. Ramadan explains that political literalist salafism has attracted "a lot of public attention"—though it is represented in the Western countries only "by structures and factional networks." This last phrase is incomprehensible to me, but it communicates an impression that, in spite of the public attention, political literalist salafism does not count for much. Ramadan disapproves of this tendency, owing to its textual literalism and its unspecified departures from salafi reformist principles—though he also rushes to ascribe the tendency's errors not to any elements intrinsic to its salafi reformist roots but to the ghastly way that Muslim governments have suppressed the mainstream salafi reformists.

As to why the political literalist salafists should have attracted "a lot of public attention," Ramadan says nothing at all in his main text. Only in a footnote does he mention "violent and spectacular actions," and not even there does he remark on any sort of radical departure from basic morality. Nor does he define any relation that might exist between this sort of thing and the legacies of Qutb. A veil of timidity and euphemism hangs over the entire discussion, which could lead a sleepy reader to miss his meaning altogether.

And yet it is obvious what Ramadan is talking about in this particular passage. Political literalist salafism is the doctrine underlying the terrorism that has emerged from salafi reformism—the vast wave of random murder, the vogue for "violent and spectacular actions," that has swept across so many regions of the Muslim world and beyond. That is what he means by "radical revolutionary action." He does refer somewhat cautiously in a footnote to "a section" of the Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria, by which he must have in mind the people who went about slaughtering whole villages in Algeria during the 1990s and who are evidently not finished yet. But mostly he is the sphinx. At least Ramadan does not deny the estranged sibling relation between his own wing of salafi reformism and the champions of "radical revolutionary action"—these different currents that descend from the same source. Ramadan is, on this particular theme, more straightforward than his *Times* profiler.

Still, Ramadan has left out a few details, and these do add up to something. On the topic of al-Banna and Qutb, for instance, it is true, yes, that in spite of being exact contemporaries, the two men never did meet in person. Al-Banna was a salafi reformist from the start, but Qutb, in his younger years, was a secular intellectual, a poet, and a literary critic—which meant that al-Banna and Qutb disapproved of each

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other. Still, they did not live on opposite sides of the earth. Qutb, as I learn from a biography by Adnan A. Musallam called *From Secularism to Jihad: Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism*, adhered to a school of Romantic poetry in Egypt, influenced by Coleridge among others, and his ideas about poetry led him to seek truth in his own heart (as opposed to following the traditions of established schools) and at the same time to yearn romantically for death. Qutb's poetry took an apocalyptic turn as well—which, though his biographer does not make the point, could be compared stanza for stanza with some of the apocalyptic poetry of the fin-de-siècle European Symbolist poets. And all of this, the Romantic and Symbolist literary impulses, mirrored al-Banna's Islamic thinking pretty closely.

What was salafi reformism, after all, if not a belief that truth could be obtained directly from the Qur'an and the seventh century (as opposed to following the traditions of the established schools of Islamic jurisprudence)? And what was al-Banna's phrase about "the art of death" and "death is art" if not an Islamic variation on Qutb's Romantic-poetry yearning for the eternity of the tomb? As for Qutb's Symbolist-poetry apocalyptic fantasies—well! This was Islamism itself, in its Mussolinian, Third Reich–style yearning for the final showdown. Seen from this angle, Qutb's Romantic secularism and al-Banna's Romantic Islamism were variations on a theme. And then, in the mid-1940s, Qutb began to drift in Islamist directions himself, and al-Banna was anything but hostile. Sayyid Qutb and Naguib Mahfouz made up a mutual admiration society in those days (Qutb, in his capacity as literary critic, played an important role in bringing public recognition to Mahfouz's talent), and in 1948 Qutb and Mahfouz and a few other people launched a magazine, with Qutb as editor.

Al-Banna tried to woo the magazine for the Muslim Brotherhood. The next year, al-Banna was assassinated. Qutb happened to be in the United States at the time, and, in one of the stranger passages of his report on his American experience, he recounted that Americans were jubilant over al-Banna's death—which has got to be a fantasy, given that in 1949 hardly anyone in the United States had heard of Hassan al-Banna. The fantasy nonetheless suggests that al-Banna's late-life appreciation for Qutb had begun to be balanced by Qutb's appreciation for al-Banna as a world-historical figure, even if they never met. Then Qutb returned to Egypt and enlisted in the Muslim Brotherhood, and found his way to al-Banna's son-in-law, "the little Hassan al-Banna," Said Ramadan, the editor of *Al-Muslimun*. Said Ramadan's magazine presented the ideas of Abu Ala Mawdudi to the Arabic-speaking world, and Qutb adopted some of these ideas for what now became his own ultra-revolutionary doctrine.

Qutb began to contribute his own monthly articles to *Al-Muslimun*. Some of those monthly articles were eventually gathered together in a book called *Toward an Islamic Society*. But Qutb's most important contributions to *Al-Muslimun* consisted of commentaries on the Qur'an, which were strikingly original—commentaries written not in the spirit of traditional jurisprudential analysis but, instead, in the spirit of Romantic literary criticism, drawn from the heart instead of from the scholarly texts. These were the articles that, in book form, eventually blossomed into Qutb's gigantic masterwork, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, which is widely regarded as the single greatest literary product of the worldwide Islamist movement.

And so, yes—a third time, yes—Qutb and Tariq Ramadan's grandfather never met, if only because of al-Banna's assassination. But Ramadan's father, Said Ramadan, the editor of *Al-Muslimun*, not only knew Qutb; he was, at the crucial moment, Qutb's most important supporter in the world of the Egyptian intellectuals. Said Ramadan was the editor who got Qutb started on what became his most important work. And at the worst moment of Qutb's life—in 1965, when, having already languished in prison during most of the time since the crackdown of 1954, he was accused one last time of plotting a revolution, for which he would be hanged a year later—his alleged conspiracy was said to include, of course, Said Ramadan, the man who avoided a similar fate only because, back in 1954, he happened to have been out of the country.

Ian Hamel in *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan* insists that, in his last years, Said Ramadan put some distance between himself and Qutb's legacy. But that is a late-life detail. The biographies of Said Ramadan and Sayyid Qutb are otherwise intertwined. And in this case what is past is not, in fact, past, and Tariq Ramadan's career has likewise twined itself around the Qutb legacy. Said Ramadan worked long ago with Mawdudi in Pakistan, and Mawdudi's British followers established their Islamic Foundation, and Tariq Ramadan published his first two English-language books at the Islamic Foundation and spent his year of study at its campus for reasons that were entirely natural and familial. The Islamic Foundation has been slowly bringing out a handsome edition of Mawdudi's own multi-volume Qur'anic commentary, *Toward Understanding the Qur'an*, translated from Urdu into English. And the foundation has also been bringing out Qutb's *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, likewise in a handsome edition—some ten volumes of which, out of what is promised ultimately to be eighteen, now sit on my own bookshelves. All of this makes perfect sense, given that salafi reformism does constitute a movement broad enough to stretch from al-Banna to his son-in-law to Mawdudi and Qutb and, ultimately, to Tariq Ramadan. The Islamic Foundation, from its British campus with its Al-Banna Hall, has done nothing at all peculiar in publishing Mawdudi, Qutb, and Ramadan, these several intellectual stars in a single constellation.

Only why did none of this, not even a trace, appear in the portrait of Ramadan in the *Times* magazine? It's not as if Buruma skipped over the issue of Ramadan's relation, via his grandfather, to Qutb. Buruma did pose the question, even if he satisfied himself by publishing Ramadan's remark about Grandfather al-Banna and Qutb not having known each other. Nor did Buruma lack for information of his own. In *Occidentalism* he discusses Qutb. He points out the Nazi influence on Qutb's thinking. The editors of *The New York Times* magazine (who some years ago published my own essay on Qutb) had every reason to expect that on this topic, as on many topics, Buruma knew what he was doing. He must have arrived at the conclusion for some reason that in the *Times* magazine it was good to ask the question about the relation to Sayyid Qutb, but bad to answer the question.

In any event, the family ties between Tariq Ramadan and Sayyid Qutb offer an analytic opportunity. Ramadan's reputation for less-than-frankness raises a bit of a problem for anyone who cares to figure him out. If you wanted to know the beliefs and opinions of any number of public figures, you could go ask them, and you could publish their replies with a reasonable certainty that you were getting the real poop. Not so Ramadan. He poses a difficulty—the constant possibility of an esoteric meaning. Still, there is a way to put his doctrines into some kind of historical and intellectual perspective, and this is to stand Ramadan next

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to Qutb—the father's son next to the father's author, the Islamic Foundation's book-writer next to the Islamic Foundation's book-writer, salafi reformist next to salafi reformist. Ramadan himself devotes a chapter of *The Roots of the Muslim Revival* to Qutb, just to show that nothing is illegitimate in proposing such a comparison. And, with Ramadan standing next to Qutb, it ought to be possible one more time to ask the question, which still has not been answered: what does he stand for, in the end? Salafi reformism—what does it amount to, finally?

V.

Salafi reformism, judging from Qutb and Ramadan, turns out to be a kind of Rousseauianism. There is a pure and authentic way of living, which is the Muslim way. And yet the Muslims, who were born free, are everywhere in chains. The Muslims are oppressed by what Ramadan calls "a Western aggressive cultural invasion"—which is the kind of language that Qutb liked to use half a century ago (and al-Banna before him). A very great danger arises from the Western "colonization of minds," in Ramadan's phrase, by which he means the influence of television. This was Qutb's worry exactly, even in the pre-television age, which he described as "the cultural influences which had penetrated my mind." And so the road back to the pure and authentic way of living must be found.

The road is textual, and it leads back to the foundational documents of seventh-century Islam, which record the pure and the authentic before the days of Western cultural aggression and the colonization of minds. And yet neither of these men wants to reconstruct the seventh century brick by brick. Both of them are convinced that, in its comprehensiveness, the Qur'anic revelation is larger than the modern world and can swallow it whole—convinced that, instead of reconstructing the seventh century, they can reconstruct the modern age, and do so along salafist lines. They can fill each element of modern life with a proper Islamic meaning. Therefore they need to read the ancient texts with an eye to the modern world and come up with new interpretations: Islamic responses, point by point, to the challenge from the West, which conventional Islam has failed to do. That is why they are "reformists"—unlike the scholastic traditionalists (to use Ramadan's term), who merely go on rehearsing the ancient Islamic jurisprudence; and unlike the starker fundamentalists, who do want to rebuild the seventh century.

It has to be said that, in regard to reading the ancient texts with an eye to the modern world, Qutb is vastly more interested in the ancient texts, whereas Ramadan appears to be mostly absorbed in the modern world. Still, the principle remains intact. And then, since both men are seeking a practical result—the reconstruction of a proper Muslim community—they have no alternative but to give their project a political aspect, which is the doctrine of al-Banna.

And the ancient-and-modern orientation leads to another common trait, which is the tendency on the part of both men to grab hold of modern political vocabularies and convert them to their own purposes—quite as if a political vocabulary could be regarded as one more empty modern reality waiting to be infused with Qur'anic meaning. Do modern political thinkers speak about such-and-such? Qutb and Ramadan will rush to do the same, only in versions that seem to them faithful to the Qur'an. Qutb, following this instinct, sometimes sounds like an early twentieth-century revolutionary anarchist. Then again, sometimes he sounds (in one of his earlier books) like a New Dealer. "Social security" figures among his ideals. Those are vocabularies from his own time.

Ramadan, being a man of the postmodern era, prefers to sound like a

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liberation theologian from Latin America. Or he sounds like one of his anti-globalist allies, railing against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He cites the Greco-French philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis, the philosopher of left-wing "autonomy," which is Ramadan's way of indulging in his own anarchist-like flights of fancy. Or Ramadan sounds like a moderate reformer in the conventional civic and not the salafi sense—like someone who has a few practical and well-intentioned proposals to make on behalf of marginalized populations.

Yet the modern rhetorics always turn out to be translations, in one fashion or another, of Qur'anic concepts. They are worldly exteriors with Islamic interiors. Qutb, in launching his anarchistic odes to freedom, means to say that, under his proposed resurrected Islamic caliphate, human beings will no longer be tyrannously ruled by other human beings but only by God, as interpreted by God's representatives. The libertarian rhetoric turns out to be a theocratic argument against democracy. By "social security," Qutb means the traditional Islamic obligation to pay a charity tax. Ramadan invokes civil libertarian arguments in order to defend the autonomy of his reconstructed Muslim community. He invokes the anti-globalist rhetoric of his left-wing allies in order to defend the mainstream Islamist movements in the Muslim world. And so forth, throughout the entire modern terminology.

None of this is meant to deceive anyone. These people are trying to conduct a thorough "reform" not of the world, but of Islam—a campaign to ensure that Islamic thinking will expand to match each new innovation of modern life without losing the connection to the original revelation. So they look for modern concepts, and for Qur'anic equivalents, and they fill the modern with the Qur'anic. And with all of this in hand, they set about posing their challenges to the unreformed Muslims, and to the modern, non-Muslim world.

The challenges they pose turn out to be different, however. Qutb wrote his principal works in the decades between the 1940s and 1966; and, like the fascists on the extreme right in those years, or the Marxists and the anarchists on the extreme left, he pictured the entire world hurtling toward a catastrophic crisis, which he interpreted along paranoid and apocalyptic lines. His vision of the impending collapse of both the West and the communist East Bloc, his vision of an Islamic revolutionary vanguard establishing somewhere an Islamic state and using it to export the Islamic revolution to the Muslim world and then to everywhere else, his vision of the Qur'anic utopia to come—all this was fairly wild: a grandiose version of al-Banna's already pop-eyed and Mussolinian idea about resurrecting the Islamic Empire. Perhaps Qutb's vision enjoyed one great advantage over the other mid-twentieth-century revolutionary projects, and this was Islam, an exceptionally sturdy base on which to rest his many novel ideas. Even so, his was a vision in the mid-twentieth-century mode.

Ramadan bears no relation to any of this. He is post-paranoid and post-apocalyptic. He thinks that Western-dominated globalization produces the poverty of the underdeveloped "south," the Muslim world included, and ought to be resisted. He is furious about Western assaults on the Muslim world, which in his eyes seem to be taking place no matter what the West happens to be doing or not doing—failing for such a long time to intervene in Bosnia, or choosing to intervene in Afghanistan (which strikes him as an American "retaliation against the people of Afghanistan"). In the 1990s he swelled with indignation at the sanctions imposed on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and these days he swells with still more indignation at the invasion that overthrew Saddam. Everything the United States does strikes him as something of a plot; but this is not unusual. He does not seem obsessed by the coming catastrophe. He has no intention of launching revolutionary wars. He adheres to the preaching, or *dawa*, school of salafi reformism, and he wants to achieve his successes through persuasion and legal methods. His dreams do not point to a utopian climax. Mostly he wants to construct an Islamic counterculture within the West—his reconstructed Muslim community, which instead of withdrawing behind ghetto walls will take its place within the larger non-Muslim society.

Ramadan wants a share of the public space, not just a share of the private sphere. Or more than wants: he demands a share of the public space. A properly Muslim life has a physical and communal quality, which must be lived in physical space, and this will require modifications in the existing European secularism. Therefore he wants—he needs—to stick a few sharp elbows into the larger society, demanding his extra space. And does he dream in secret of something larger? Maybe he does, on some theological level, which would not be unusual. All great religions dream great (and dangerous) dreams. Still, Fourest and Landau and some of Ramadan's other panicky critics suspect something much more worldly. They suspect that clandestinely Ramadan, too, entertains the larger pop-eyed more-than-theological project: a world dominated by Islam, with his Muslim counterculture serving as the future empire's fifth column within Europe, under the ultimate control of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Exactly why the panicky critics harbor these suspicions ought to be easily understood. The Muslim emigration has turned out to be one of history's largest events, and in scattered regions across the whole of Western Europe, old-stock populations nowadays wake up to discover that people from the Muslim world have suddenly come to dominate this or that neighborhood or town, and Arabic or Turkish has begun to outpace some of the smaller European languages, and here and there Islamist groups are demanding censorship of one thing or another, or are demanding gender-segregated beaches, or the curricular demise of Voltaire or Darwin, or an end to history instruction on the crimes of Nazism. And there are always sermons by one or another exotically costumed Islamic scholar fantasizing about a Muslim conquest of Europe and the world, which therefore can be cited as evidence of a giant conspiracy. And it is true that, in Europe, the Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups are prospering among the immigrant populations, not to mention Qutb's radical fringe groups, which are thoroughly terrifying; and true that Ramadan is theorizing the Muslim advance; and true that Ramadan wants his Muslim counterculture to promote the mainstream Islamists elsewhere in the world.

Only none of this needs to be interpreted as a fifth column acting on the Brotherhood's secret plan. Mostly Ramadan's worldwide ambition appears to be something else entirely: the dream of a Western Islam, in his own salafi reformist version, taking the lead among Muslim currents everywhere; the dream of Western Islam, in his version of it, becoming the center, in-

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stead of a faraway outpost, of the larger Muslim world. But that is not a millenarian eschatology.

Judged on strictly literary grounds, there is no comparison between these men. Qutb, even in translation, commands a prose style of his own, which is typically serene and discursive, and nonetheless capable of sulfurous outpourings. He has the advantage of a background in literary criticism, which allows him to comment easily on the Qur'an and its style and mood. Most of all he has the advantage of the Qur'an, which occupies his attention. Qutb shows no embarrassment at all in noting the seventh-century barbarities whenever they seem apropos—the cruel amputations and other punishments ordained by *huddud*, the penal code, which he carefully discusses ("In case of a third or fourth theft, scholars have different views as to what is cut off," and so forth). The barbarous passages add a peculiar thrill to his writings, a frisson of the weird and the forbidden that seems all the more powerful because his tone of voice never changes: the tone of a man speaking with tranquility and confidence about things that are cosmically true.

And Qutb is, not least, a writer capable of summoning up the passions of hatred. He rains mighty blows upon the Jews of ancient Arabia. He scrupulously acknowledges that, here and there, the Qur'an contains passages that show compassion or kindliness to this or that individual Jew, but he prefers the other, more numerous passages: the descriptions of Jewish treachery and enmity during Muhammad's years in Medina, which in Qutb's estimation represent the eternal Jewish trait. In Qutb's commentaries (just as in Said Ramadan's *Al-Muslimun*, according to Hamel), you stumble here and there on references to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, in a simple display of the continuing influence of Nazi and Nazi-like influences from Europe, even in the period after Nazism had been defeated; and in a simple display, likewise, of Qutb's reformism, to use the right word—his willingness to interpret the ancient texts on the basis of modern ideas. Not every modern idea is a good one, after all; nor every reform, a forward step.

The Swiss professor, by contrast, who never languished in an Egyptian jail, has never managed to work up a reliable prose style. Sometimes Ramadan writes in a heated and emotional tone, personal, slightly archaic, grim, tight-lipped; and this is startling to see. The very first sentences of *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity* offer a breathless description of an unnamed person who turns out to be the author's father: "I still have the intimate memory of his presence and of his silences. Sometimes, long silences sunk in memory and thoughts and, often, in bitterness. He had a keen eye and a penetrating look that now carried his warmth, kindness and tears, and now armed his determination, commitment and anger." At other times he lapses into a faux esoteric and ecumenical guru tone, suitable for all denominations. The first sentence of Ramadan's new book, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet*: "In the hours of dawn when this book was written, there was silence, meditative solitude, and the experience of a journey, beyond time and space, toward the heart, the essence of spiritual quest, and initiation into meaning."

More often, Ramadan produces a solid professorial expository prose, unremarkable and clear, except for some obvious infelicities of translation. He never even toys with the idea that pulses so insistently within Qutb's Qur'anic commentaries—the idea that merely by turning his pages you are performing a religious act, or are engaging, soldier-like, in a bold and dangerous mission. Then again, if Ramadan makes very few efforts to inspire a sense of spiritual elevation, neither does he strain himself to incite his readers. Ramadan is not a hater—not by Qutb's standards, certainly. Sulfurous odors do not seep upward from the page.

But his books can seem a little bowdlerized. His own recounting of Muhammad's life and teachings in *In the Footsteps of the Prophet* is relentlessly bland, as if he has gone out of his way to avoid the Qur'anic tones of florid exaltation. "Life went on in Medina." "The situation had become difficult for the Muslim community in Medina." "The Muslims had returned to Medina and daily life had resumed its course, in a far less tense atmosphere than before." The Prophet himself is a very nice person. Muhammad adores his first wife: "He loved her so much." Also his other wives. Muhammad is reasonable. The little contradictions that pop up in the Qur'an, which Qutb patiently disentangles, pretty much disappear in Ramadan's account. On the topic of the Jews—to stick with the controversies in Medina—Ramadan presents Muhammad as thoughtful and just. Even when Muhammad orders the massacre of all the males of a Jewish tribe, Ramadan makes it clear that Muhammad has issued the order not because the hostile Jewish tribe embodies an eternal quality of Zionist evil, but because Muhammad needs to teach his numerous enemies, Jewish and otherwise, a stern lesson. And because the massacre succeeds at doing this, no further massacres of that sort need to be committed, thus demonstrating Muhammad's wisdom and even his restraint.

The Jews themselves arouse nothing venomous in Ramadan's account of Muhammad's life and experience of revelation. On the contrary, Ramadan emphasizes the common God worshiped by Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike. Naturally Ramadan acknowledges that, in Medina, Muhammad's relations with the Jewish tribes take an unfortunate turn. And yet, in Ramadan's version, "those developments by no means affected the principles underlying the relationship between Muslims and Jews: mutual recognition and respect, as well as justice before the law or in the settlement of disputes between individuals and/or groups." From a present-day political standpoint, Ramadan's presentation is more than superior, it is altogether commendable.

Passages in Ramadan's account could lead you to believe that if Qur'anic scholars ever wanted to spell out a scriptural basis for Muslim recognition of a Jewish state, the prophetic revelations might well prove to be, upon examination, more elastically flexible than previously imagined. Anyway, a good story, like an inveterate thief, can always be usefully amputated, in order to eliminate the disagreeable antisocial aspects. But then the surgical amputations, and Ramadan's spirit of uplift and multicultural piety, might prompt a skeptical reader to wonder if, as in Ramadan's several remarks to the credulous Buruma, something crucial may have been craftily withheld. Something about the Jews, maybe? Violence? Women? I do not bring up these three issues to be provocative. Ramadan's life during the last few years, his history of polemics and controversies, has already broached these particular matters—which drags me back one last time to the double question of his Genevan opinions and their shimmery Lake Léman reflections in the press.

VI.

In the *Times* magazine, Buruma did inquire into these three controversies—over Jews, violence, and women—and, in regard to the Jews, he did this by wondering about twenty-first-century France instead of seventh-

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century Arabia. This was appropriate. Four years ago, Ramadan launched a polemic against six well-known French intellectuals—Pierre-André Taguieff, Alexandre Adler, André Glucksmann, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Alain Finkielkraut, and Bernard Kouchner—whom he grouped together as Jews. And he launched some accusations. In Buruma's summary of the affair, Ramadan complained that the various intellectuals had abandoned universal principles by becoming, in Buruma's phrase, "knee-jerk defenders of Israel." Buruma considered this complaint to be, in his word, "unfair," and that was because the several intellectuals in question, as he described them, "had all championed many causes other than Israel, including putting a stop to the mass murder of Muslims in Bosnia."

But then, in his even-handed spirit, Buruma went on to compare the intellectuals to "many early neoconservatives" in the United States, which is a description that five or six readers of the *Times* magazine may have regarded as neutral and objective, but was bound to be viewed by everyone else as pejorative, if not a withering condemnation. And Buruma observed that at least some of those French intellectuals struck back at Ramadan in ways that were, in Buruma's words, "shrill" and "vastly overblown," namely, by accusing Ramadan of anti-Semitism—which, in Buruma's view, they should not have done because these kinds of attacks, in Buruma's words, "have a way of sticking to their target." But did Ramadan deserve these attacks in a non-shrill and underblown way? Buruma went out on a limb. Ramadan, he flatly declared, "is in fact one of the few Muslim intellectuals to speak out against anti-Semitism."

Such was the account in the *Times* magazine. It was not accurate. In his polemic of four years ago, Ramadan's chief complaint about the people he grouped together as Jewish intellectuals did not boil down to calling them "knee-jerk defenders of Israel." Ramadan complained that his group of intellectuals had abandoned what he called universal values in order to advance their narrow community interests as Jews. A retreat to Jewish tribalism: that was the accusation, and the communal loyalties had to do, above all else, with French domestic politics. Ramadan accused the intellectuals of making a false issue out of anti-Semitism in present-day France, a false complaint that bigotry against Jews has lately begun to revive in a novel form, different from the Christian religious hatreds of the Middle Ages, and different from the hatreds of the fascist era, though perhaps not entirely different.

The writer who has chiefly advanced this idea is Taguieff, the author of a book called *La Nouvelle Judéophobie* (which has been somewhat oddly translated as *Rising From the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe*); and Taguieff's was the first name to come under Ramadan's attack. Taguieff is the principal historian of racism in France today, and, as it happens, he is not Jewish—a mistake on Ramadan's part, which Buruma duly noted. Still, the question remains: regardless of Taguieff's ancestors or religious affiliation, does his notion about the rise of a new kind of French anti-Semitism, a "new Judeophobia," reflect some kind of communal loyalty to the Jews on his part, perhaps a loyalty that he has freely chosen for one reason or another? The obnoxiousness of this question ought to be obvious. The only proper question ought to be, is Taguieff a good historian?

This, at least, is answerable. A new kind of hostility to Jews does seem to have cropped up in France, and the evidence for this proposition, I would think, has the misfortune of being overwhelming. It is confirmed by the flight of some French Jews from the immigrant working-class suburbs; by the much-discussed difficulty or inability of even non-Jewish schoolteachers in those same suburbs to teach students about the Holocaust, out of fear of arousing Islamist anger; and by some well-reported violent crimes. It is true that, for a couple of years, the government in France, and the mainstream press as well, stuck to the view that most of this was greatly exaggerated. And yet after a while, when the problem failed to go away, the French government organized its own advisory commission, and the commission arrived at the conclusion—reported in *The New York Times* in March 2005—that 62 percent of the hate crimes committed in France during the previous year were directed at Jews. This is the kind of pseudo-precise statistic that can seem a little dubious, but it does suggest a trend, especially when you consider that France's Jewish population amounts to less than 1 percent of the total French population.

As to how sinister and dangerous the "new Judeophobia" may be: that is a separate issue. Jumpiness is the modern French condition, and some of the jumpier commentators have left an impression that France's Jews are undergoing a horrific wave of hatred and ought to flee for their lives to Israel. Ariel Sharon, not long before his health collapsed, advised the French Jews to do just that—only to be rebuked by André Glucksmann, as could have never have been predicted by anyone relying on Ramadan's essay, or for that matter on Buruma's. The point of Ramadan's essay, in any case, was not to argue about social realities or the accuracy of Taguieff's scholarship, but to challenge the Jewish communal loyalties that Ramadan imagined to be at work—which is still another aspect, in the zone of intellectual debate, of what Taguieff has done so much to identify.

Ramadan's second big indictment had to do with the Iraq war and its accompanying disputes, which Ramadan saw once again as proof that the Jewish intellectuals had acted on their tribal loyalties. He wrote that "intellectuals as different as Bernard Kouchner, André Glucksmann or Bernard-Henri Lévy, who had taken courageous positions on Bosnia, Rwanda or Chechnya, have curiously supported the Anglo-American intervention in Iraq." Another error turned up in this sentence. Lévy, back in 2002–2003, when the Iraq war was being debated, declined to endorse the intervention, though his endorsement would have counted for a lot. (This error was compounded by Stéphanie Giry's account of the same affair in the *Times* Book Review, which erroneously enlisted Alain Finkielkraut as still another Jewish supporter of the war.) Still, Kouchner and Glucksmann lent their endorsements—Kouchner, in a highly modulated version. But nothing was, in Ramadan's word, "curious" about this—at least, nothing suggesting a retreat from positions held in the past.

Kouchner, in his capacity as humanitarian activist, not to mention as a veteran campaigner for the Kurds, has advocated humanitarian interventions in any number of instances over the years, which makes it hardly surprising that, in 2003, he would have seen a virtue in overthrowing Saddam. The same logic applies to Glucksmann. Nor has either of those men, Kouchner or Glucksmann, kept the public uninformed about his reasoning. These are voluble men, at book length. They have even acknowledged, both of them, an influence from their Jewish backgrounds on their recent thinking, though the influence has zero to do with Israel. They were influenced by their experiences as toddlers during the years when Nazis

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ruled France—experiences that led both men to conclude that powerful countries have a duty to protect populations victimized by dictatorships.

Ramadan argued that, by intervening in Iraq, the United States "certainly acted in the name of its own interests, but we know that Israel supported the intervention and that its military advisers were engaged among the troops." More: "We also know that the architect of this operation in the heart of the Bush administration is Paul Wolfowitz, a notorious Zionist, who has never concealed that the fall of Saddam Hussein would guarantee a better security for Israel with its economic advantages assured." It ought not to require an exceptionally fine mind to detect the conspiracy theory at work in these remarks. I cringe at having to add that Wolfowitz, whatever his other sins, has never been known for his Zionism (though I realize that, given the confluence of z's, hardly anyone will believe me). Ramadan's description of the Jewish intellectuals in France pretty much harmonizes, by the way, with his description in *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* of the American Jews as well—the American Jews who, en bloc, are said by Ramadan to form a "lobby" (the word has been internationalized) that advocates Jewish interests and the promoting of Israel in lieu of standing for "right, justice, and ethics," which is what he thinks that Muslims should do.

So, yes, Glucksmann and Lévy responded in print. Glucksmann began his response by writing, "Mr. Ramadan says, in short: Glucksmann doesn't think with his head, he thinks with his race" (though Buruma, in the *Times* magazine, skipped over this line, which contains the nub of the argument, in order merely to quote Glucksmann's insult: "What is surprising is not that Mr. Ramadan is anti-Semitic, but that he dares to proclaim it openly"). Lévy, as Buruma reports, adverted to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. But were these responses especially shrill and overblown, as Buruma claims? Ramadan's polemic did have the sound, in some people's estimation, of an ultra-right-wing rally, with a demagogic leader calling out the names of Jewish journalists to the jeers of a crowd—but perhaps this echo is not widely appreciated outside of France. The anti-globalists in France posted Ramadan's polemic on their European Social Forum website; but once the anti-globalists had listened to the responses, they took it down again, abashed, and not because they had been intimidated.

But never mind the Jews. The most striking comment in Buruma's *Times* magazine account of this affair is something else entirely—his plea, in Ramadan's defense, that "Ramadan is in fact one of the few Muslim intellectuals to speak out against anti-Semitism." It is as if, in picturing the modern Muslim world, Buruma can imagine only a landscape of bearded fanatics—the kind of people who, like Qutb in his Qur'anic commentaries or Hamas in its charter, do natter on about *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. And, to be sure, there are many such types, which is Taguieff's point. And Ramadan has indeed issued some excellent condemnations of anti-Semitism (which Hamel quotes at length), even apart from his genuinely commendable interpretation of the Prophet Muhammad and the Jews of ancient Arabia.

But good grief! What can Buruma have been thinking of? You have only to glance at your own bookshelves to see how absurd is Buruma's comment about Ramadan as a lonely Muslim intellectual opposed to anti-Semitism—your shelves full of books by this or that novelist or literary critic or well-known political analyst, one book after another demonstrating that liberal culture in our modern age has come to be animated by no small number of distinguished and celebrated intellectuals from Muslim backgrounds. Or was Buruma thinking only of the Francophone world? Francophones are not so different. But I suspect that, in speaking about Muslim intellectuals, Buruma was picturing something other than ordinary intellectuals. I suspect that he was picturing the kind of person who can claim deeper social roots than book-writing intellectuals would normally care to have. He was picturing leaders with mass followings in poor neighborhoods, intellectuals whose audiences, in their folk authenticity, might enter the lecture halls through separate doors for men and women. From this point of view, Buruma might well be right. The number of demagogic rabble-rousing Islamist preachers who denounce anti-Semitism is not very large.

But let us not be too quick to assume that one person is authentic and another is not. Nor should we assume too quickly that Muslim immigrant neighborhoods are inherently deaf to liberal voices, even if Buruma's description of Ramadan as a lonely Muslim voice against anti-Semitism does seem to imply something of that sort. The "new

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Judeophobia" that Taguieff has identified is unquestionably a large phenomenon, but it is also, as Taguieff's coinage suggests, new. And yet the immigrant neighborhoods are relatively old. Something has happened, then; and Ramadan may even have played a role in bringing the something about. He began to build his social base in the Arab districts of Lyon in 1992. But those neighborhoods do have a history, and this history does not begin with Islamism. In 1983, a tiny group of young Arabs in Lyon organized something called a "March for Equality" to protest their own social conditions and those of people like themselves. And the tiny group set out for Paris. The march turned out to be a big event. The young people from Lyon captured the popular imagination. By the time they arrived in Paris, their numbers had swollen to 100,000, and the protest had become known as the "March of the Beurs"—a slang word, friendly and not at all racist, for young Arabs.

Here was a genuinely mass movement. It gave rise, the next year, to an organization called SOS Racism. And SOS Racism likewise proved to be a popular success, for a while. SOS Racism called a rally in the Place de la Concorde in Paris in 1985. I happened to be there myself. Hundreds of thousands of young people attended, Arabs and everybody else, glorying in their multi-hued splendor—which SOS Racism made a point of rendering fashionable. These were the avatars of 1980s anti-racism and social equality, young people who were determined to shout down the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotries of the French extreme right, and were determined to protest the disparities of wealth, and had good reason to make these protests. But SOS Racism defined its principles broadly, and was therefore the enemy of anti-Semitism as well. Explicitly, no less. SOS Racism's slogan was "*Touches pas à mon pote!*"—"Don't touch my buddy!"—and this was an affecting and popular slogan for a trendy movement of the anti-racist young. People wore a cheerful-looking button bearing that slogan, and in some neighborhoods the button itself came into fashion, pinned to every lapel.

A number of media-savvy writers stood behind the movement, and orchestrated the press and offered a bit of intellectual leadership. And these people, who were they? Marek Halter, the popular novelist, was one of them. The best-known was Bernard-Henri Lévy, the same person whom the readers of Ramadan's polemic from 2003 could only view as an agent of the notorious Zionist within the Bush administration, and whom the readers of Buruma's piece in the *Times* magazine could only regard as an incipient neocon. But SOS Racism was not a neocon development. It was something new on the left, a wing of the larger popular left that, in the 1980s, worked up an excitement for Amnesty International, and for East Bloc dissidents, and for famine relief—quite as if anti-racism, human rights, Arab rights, women's rights, anti-totalitarianism, humanitarian awareness, the rebelliousness of the young, a fashion for boldly colored clothes and for certain kinds of music, and the cult of motorcycles could be viewed, in a tizzy of trendiness, as one and the same.

Only what happened to that movement in the years that followed—the movement that got its start among the "Beurs" of Lyon? It was defeated. That is the big story lurking underneath all these current debates about Tariq Ramadan and salafi reformism. SOS Racism was defeated by its own errors and missteps, none of which were especially dreadful but did give the impression that politicians in the Socialist Party were pulling the strings, and SOS Racism had ended up a feel-good exercise for softheads. But mostly the new movement was defeated by a newer movement, which competed for support in the immigrant streets. The newer movement (as I learn from the various biographies of Ramadan) likewise got started in the immigrant zones of Lyon.

The newer movement was the Union of Young Muslims, founded in 1987, four years after the March of the Beurs, precisely in order to fight against everything that had come out of the March of the Beurs. The Union of Young Muslims was, exactly like SOS Racism, a movement for social justice—only, instead of being animated by the trendy mishmash of 1980s left-liberalism, the new movement invoked seventh-century Islam, in the style descended from al-Banna. And the two movements, the brand-new Islamists and the left-wing liberals, went head-to-head in a competition for support. SOS Racism campaigned to prevent nightclubs from discriminating against young Arabs and blacks. The Islamists campaigned to prevent young Muslims from going to nightclubs.

By the time Ramadan arrived in Lyon, the Union of Young Muslims was five years old, and the Tawhid bookstore and publishing house were reasonably well-established, and yet those were immigrant institutions, a little rough around the edges, the bookstore filled (according to Paul Landau in *The Saber and the Qur'an*) with anti-Semitic tracts, the tape cassettes with rants. Ramadan added polish and eloquence to those endeavors, even if, being a bourgeois from Geneva, he could never quite make himself at home in the proletarian streets. And in the immigrant districts of Lyon, the fiery refurbished hard-headed Islamists outcompeted the politician-ridden soft-headed liberal left. Then again, this was more than a local story. Islamists defeated leftists all over the world.

There is another half to this story, though, which is what happened on the left in the wake of these defeats. The rise of Islamism in the 1980s and 1990s created a tremendous crisis on the European and even the American left—even if, for most left-wingers at the time, the crisis went unnamed and undiscussed. The crisis was unavoidable, though. What does it mean to be on the left, after all? I mean the larger left, the left that includes everybody marked by even the faintest and most attenuated of left-wing traces—the progressives, and the people who, with still more sophistication, shudder with savvy distaste at any ideological label at all. To be on the left: doesn't this mean a solidarity with the poor and the downtrodden?

The March of the Beurs excited support and acclaim in France in 1983 precisely because, for the first time on a national scale, the sincere young anti-racists of old-stock France were offered a way to manifest their solidarity with the oppressed immigrants. But once SOS Racism had lost its sheen, everybody who identified even faintly with the left had to pause and consider what new attitude to adopt. Here were the Islamists, shouldering aside the liberal left, and shouldering aside the dowdy mainline Muslim organizations, too—the Islamists, claiming to be, at last, the true and authentic representatives of the poor and the downtrodden. The Islamists, in spite of a thousand principles that were otherwise unthinkable to the left. This required a left-wing response.

In France—and in Britain and other countries, too—the first people on the left to recognize that something big was going on proved to be the tiny and ridiculous-looking Trotskyist sects. The Trotskyists saw an opening. From a Marxist perspective, Islamism was strange, and it was true that Trotskyism, back in the 1940s, used to have its own literature (there was a famous

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essay by Tony Cliff) about the fascist nature of the Muslim Brotherhood. But that was long ago, and Trotskyists pride themselves on not being finicky. So the Trotskyists reached out. Nor were they the only ones. Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamist revolution in Iran came to power in 1979 by allying with the Marxists of Iran, meaning the groups that were pro-Soviet, and this development led communist parties all over the world, during the early 1980s, to look on Iran's Islamists as a progressive movement: a force for anti-imperialism and social justice. In its May Day parade, the French Communist Party marched through Paris with an Iranian delegation called Hezbollah, as Ladan Boroumand has pointed out—something that could never have happened in the past.

These developments on the old-school Marxist left might appear of no significance whatsoever, given that, by the 1980s, old-school Marxism was beginning to fade ever more quickly into the past. In France the communists were undergoing the first stages of their collapse. As for Trotskyism, it was, almost by definition, a microscopic cause. Still, no one should be counted out. In the first round of the presidential elections in France in 2002, a lot of high-minded progressives wanted to register a protest vote, and Trotskyist candidates were on the ballot, and 10 percent of the electorate ended up voting Trotskyist (which is how, back in 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen edged past the Socialist candidate in the first round of elections and ended up in second place). Something similar cropped up at the big anti-war marches in February 2003: the giant demonstrations in Paris and London, not to mention in New York, Washington, San Francisco, and many other places. The tiny Marxist groupuscules played an outsize role in organizing those demonstrations, either behind the scenes, as in the United States (where the groupuscules were exceptionally tiny), or front and center, as in Europe. And the Marxist organizers with their new alliances added a new and peculiar note to those gigantic events.

The march in Paris offered the most scandalous example, not just because a contingent of Baathists marched by with their placards in favor of Saddam Hussein, but also because a group of peace demonstrators broke away from the march and beat up some Jews—a minor event, universally condemned, but hinting of something new in the air. Nothing even faintly resembling an attack on random Jews could possibly have taken place at any previous left-wing demonstration in France during the last many decades. The march in London proceeded without anything shameful taking place, but this only made the situation in London easier to identify, since everybody was well behaved. Britain's Stop the War Coalition, which organized the February 2003 march and a good many additional demonstrations during the next years, was visibly dominated by the tiny Socialist Workers Party, in alliance with Britain's version of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim Association of Britain. Trotskyists and Islamists: "an odd marriage," as the *Economist* put it. Tony Cliff must have turned over in his grave.

Yet the marital oddity did not prevent millions of non-Trotskyists and non-Islamists from tramping through the streets under the leadership of this alliance, quite as if the millions felt confident that, no matter what might come of the march, the Socialist Workers could reasonably be ignored (a safe assumption) or even regarded with irritable fondness, and quite as if the Islamists, whom nobody could ignore, authentically represented the oppressed and the downtrodden, and therefore lent majesty to the march. Such was the implication, anyway. Nothing like a Trotskyist-Islamist alliance could possibly have mobilized millions of Britons in the past.

And among the progressive intellectuals, the people who sound off in the magazines and write their books? Here, too, a shift got under way, and Buruma—not to beat a dead horse—has offered the clearest instance of it, stage by stage. In *Occidentalism*, in 2004, he and his co-author Avishai Margalit made a big point of demonstrating the influence of fascist and Nazi ideas on various radical thinkers around the world, the Islamists included. But this kind of sophisticated ideological analysis pretty much disappeared in Buruma's next book, *Murder in Amsterdam*, which was published in 2006. *Murder in Amsterdam* described the murder of Theo van Gogh by the Islamist fanatic Muhammad Bouyeri, but Buruma no longer seemed interested in extremist doctrines and their origins and trajectory—even though, to judge from his spotty descriptions, the murderer Bouyeri appears to be a reasonably consistent ideologue, clinging to Islamist doctrines descending from Qutb himself. And by February 2007, in his *Times* magazine profile, face-to-face with Tariq Ramadan and his slightly complicated family relation to Qutb, Buruma could hardly bestir himself to say anything at all about extremist ideas and their consequences.

Ramadan offered his misleading explanation that Qutb and Grandfather al-Banna never knew each other, and Buruma left it at that. Salafi reformism? Buruma failed to notice Qutb's prominence among its intellectual leaders. Anti-Semitism? Ramadan is "one of the few Muslim intellectuals to speak out." And why one of the few? It was as if, without realizing what had happened, Buruma had quietly come to accept Ramadan's overall thesis, and had begun to look upon Ramadan as the voice of the masses, and the masses as a population hopelessly steeped in the vapors of authenticity; and had come also to look upon the liberal intellectuals from Muslim backgrounds as insignificant because, in their liberalism, they are demonstrably inauthentic. Ramadan ended up being "one of the few Muslim intellectuals" because the other Muslim intellectuals, being liberals, did not count. Or worse, the other Muslim intellectuals, being liberals, sometimes stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the non-Muslim liberals, whom Buruma had decided to dismiss as neocons.

This is a pretty big development, if you stop to think about it, and one that might explain the oddly ingenuous press that Ramadan has been receiving. For if people like Ramadan and the other Islamists do speak for the oppressed and the downtrodden, and if Ramadan is a pretty good guy compared with most of his fellow salafi reformists, then shouldn't we make every effort to view Ramadan in the best of lights? He is better than Qutb, after all—so why bring up the troubling parts? Anyway, even if Qutb is a nightmare, wouldn't we be better off not inquiring too closely into the views of someone like van Gogh's murderer? Wouldn't we be better off trying to be, from a sociological point of view, halfway sympathetic? Those millions of anti-war marchers made exactly such a choice, at least on that single day in February 2003: to look on the march's Islamist leaders as the proper representatives of an oppressed community. Shouldn't we

TOMASZ WALENTA

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ferret out an upbeat definition of salafi reformism? Shouldn't we find a way to conclude, along with Buruma, that "we agreed on most issues"?

A sincere person could stroke his chin for quite a while over these questions. But then, the questions do express an attitude, which is bound to congeal into a lens, sooner or later, which might not lead to the sharpest of journalistic reportage. And if, in Buruma's journalism, a degree of fuzziness seems to have obscured his view of Ramadan and the Jewish intellectuals, what is likely to have happened in regard to Ramadan and the question of violence, a much bigger issue—this question that Buruma has resolved with the simple and confident remark about Ramadan offering "an alternative to violence"?

VII.

It is true and it is wonderful that Ramadan has, on quite a few occasions, condemned any sort of terrorist violence. Better still, these condemnations seem consistent with Ramadan's larger program for the Muslim community in Europe, which ought to require many things, but nothing even remotely resembling a violent campaign. Anyway, the entire shape of Ramadan's career so far—the energy he has expended on projecting his own ideas and personality onto the public stage in Western Europe and beyond, instead of conserving his time and strength for strictly Muslim audiences—would make no sense at all, if the ultimate purpose was to mold his followers into some sort of force, capable of opening a violent breach in society. Ramadan is said to have been influenced by the example of Malcolm X in the United States, or at least by Spike Lee's Malcolm X—Malcolm, whose last letter in real life, left unsent at his death, is said to have been addressed to Said Ramadan at the Geneva Islamic Center. But Tariq Ramadan, who has something of Malcolm's air of touchy dignity, has nothing of Malcolm's demeanor of unstated threats.

Still, sometimes it is useful to inquire a little more closely into what anyone means by violence or terrorism. Bomb attacks on random crowds in the mass-transit systems of Madrid or London obviously count as terrorist acts. But what about bomb attacks on random bus-riders in Israel? Ramadan has expressed himself on this topic, too. He is keenly anti-Zionist. He applauds the Palestinian resistance. And yet he has sometimes raised an objection to some of the methods of the Palestinian resistance: a careful distinction, well drawn. But then again, Ramadan has offered more than one commentary on anti-Zionist themes, and, to my eyes, one of those commentaries, in the introduction to *Islam, the West, and the Challenges of Modernity*, nearly leaps from the page. It comes in the course of an emotional tribute to his father, and to his father's devotion to the principles of Grandfather al-Banna.

About his father, Tariq Ramadan writes, in a passage that has been translated less than gracefully: "Often, he spoke of the determination in his commitment, at all moments, against colonialism and injustice and for the sake of Islam. This determination was though never a sanction for violence, for he rejected violence just as he rejected the idea of an 'Islamic revolution.'" The rejection of an "Islamic revolution" in this context means the rejection of armed uprisings or coups in favor of the slower, more cautious, yet still militant proceedings of the Muslim Brotherhood. Violence does not offer the road to success, from this point of view. But the passage continues. The time frame is evidently the late 1940s:

> The only exception was Palestine. On this, the message of al-Banna was clear. Armed resistance was incumbent so that the plans of the terrorists of Irgun and of all Zionist colonizers would be faced up to. He had learnt from Hassan al-Banna, as he said it one day: "to put one's forehead on the ground." The real meaning of prayer being giving strength, in humility, to the meaning of an entire life.

So there is an exception. It is violence against Zionists—against the plans of all Zionists and not just the Zionist extreme right wing, the Irgun (who were in fact terrorists, just as al-Banna says). But the peculiar note in that passage emanates from a single word, "incumbent"—a word suggesting that anti-Zionist violence is obligatory. A duty, not just a tactic. Moreover, a duty linked with prayer, forehead on the ground. A duty that gives meaning to an entire life. A religious duty.

That is a heartbreaking passage. The entire tragedy of the Palestinian people can be found in statements such as this one—the ideological dogma that has led so many Palestinians to look on violence as a principle, therefore as something that can never be abandoned. If only the Palestinian national movement had been able to look on violence as merely a tactic, the movement's leaders, and not just a handful of freethinkers and pragmatists, might have noticed after a while that, realistically speaking, violent tactics were proving to be counterproductive and ought to be exchanged for better tactics—perhaps something that might actually succeed in building a Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel, as could very likely have happened years ago. But if violence is obligatory, if it is "incumbent" on the partisans of al-Banna's Islamic renewal, if violence is an obligation that (as al-Banna observes) distinguishes anti-Zionist struggles from all other struggles against colonialism and injustice, well, there can be no question of surrendering a principle, regardless of the practical cost. And so it has been, in the history of the Palestinian movement; and the cost has been terrible, to the Palestinians above all.

There is something else in that word "incumbent," together with the forehead bowed in prayer. Tactics speak to a given circumstance, but religious duties address the universe. The notion of a religiously mandated violence, an obligatory violence, therefore opens a door, and it is hard to see what could prevent ever wilder yet equally pious obligations from ultimately pushing their way through the open space. Qutb's contribution to the notion of religious violence consisted largely of determining that Muslim "hypocrites," quite as much as Zionists or any other outright enemy of Islam, merited a violent resistance. This notion opened the door to mass killings of Muslims, in the name of Islam. And there is the example of Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi, by all accounts one of the great scholars of Sunni Islam, a man with a long and illustrious history in the Muslim Brotherhood who went on, after his emigration to Europe, to help found the European Council for Fatwa and Research—all this, even apart from his other career, thanks to Al-Jazeera television, as the world's most visible expert on Islamic jurisprudence. It was Sheik al-Qaradawi who directed the funeral prayer at Said Ramadan's funeral in Cairo in 1995—as Tariq Ramadan proudly reports in *The Roots of the Muslim Revival*.

And yet Qaradawi is also the person who, in 2003, issued the most famous of the fatwas authorizing suicide terrorism by Palestinians. He issued the gruesome fatwa permitting women to commit suicide terrorism while, at the same time, giving women terrorists a dispensation from the normal obligation to conceal their hair under a *hijab*—a bizarre

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touch on Qaradawi's part, underlining the ritualistic nature of these acts, and yet entirely in keeping with the sort of erudite matter that Qaradawi normally concerns himself with: say, whether women must keep to themselves when they are menstruating (a point that he rejects, on authority) or whether they may have intercourse with their husbands during that time (they may not, though other kinds of physical pleasure are permitted).

Among the religious authorities who stand behind the vogue for ritualized suicide terrorism in the Arab and Muslim world in the last few years, Qaradawi, drawing on his jurisprudential learning, does appear to be in the first rank—which is not an argument for downplaying the historic role of Hassan al-Banna long ago. On the contrary, the elderly Qaradawi himself has invoked, in one of his sermons, the memory of al-Banna orating on the agreeable nature of death in the cause of God. As for Tariq Ramadan, he reveres Qaradawi above all other present-day Islamic scholars, and in one book after another he has left no room for doubt about his fealty. If anyone in the world offers a model of modern enlightened Islam, Ramadan plainly judges Qaradawi to be that person. Ramadan has contributed prefaces to two collections of Qaradawi's fatwas in their French editions, not to mention other books written by people with one or another sort of connection to the terrorist vogue—these editions published by the Tawhid house in Lyon, which is Ramadan's publisher as well.

None of this alters the fact that Tariq Ramadan himself disapproves of terrorism. But there is a cost in having it both ways, in noisily affirming his place within the salafi reformist tradition while pretending that terrorist components of the movement belong only to a distant offshoot; or in affirming his own disapproval of violent action while exalting his grandfather's memory; or in condemning the terrorist aspects of the Palestinian resistance while still revering Qaradawi and even, with his prefaces, bedecking himself with Qaradawi's prestige, and bedecking Qaradawi with his own prestige. The cost is a little smudge of ambiguity in Ramadan's own position. It is the little smudge that makes the various allegations regarding the Ramadan family (in connection with the al-Taqwa Islamic bank in Switzerland, accused and later cleared of financing Al Qaeda, though the lawyers for some families of September 11 victims have lodged a lawsuit; in connection with a Qaeda financier who has been jailed in Spain since 2002, under the authority of the great Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón, who ordered the arrest of Augusto Pinochet; in connection with a Qaeda militant who came from the Lyon region; and so forth) look not more convincing than before, but also not outlandish.

The problem lies in the terrible fact that Ramadan's personal milieu—his grandfather, his family history, his family contacts, his intellectual tradition—is precisely the milieu that bears the principal responsibility for generating the modern theoretical justification for religious suicide-terrorism. Yet what can Ramadan do about this horrific reality—turn against his family? He is his family's prince. He has timidly offered jurisprudential proposals contrary to Qaradawi's; but Ramadan, unlike Qaradawi, is a university philosopher, a secular figure (in spite of everything), and not an authoritative theologian. Ramadan's opinions are opinions; Qaradawi's opinions are law. What is Ramadan to do, then? To challenge Qaradawi's authority would mean challenging the system of authority as a whole, which is something well beyond the salafi reformist idea. So Ramadan writes op-eds, which are not fatwas. And he devotes his life to burnishing the prestige of his father and grandfather and their works, and to promoting the cause of salafi reformism, which means promoting the authority of true and authentic Islamic scholars such as Qaradawi.

And his final message, therefore, ends up calling for—but what is his final message with regard to violence? It is a double message. The first message condemns terrorism. The second message lavishes praise on the theoreticians of terrorism. I suppose he expresses a third message, too, to the effect that around here nobody knows nothing about nobody, and around here nobody would dream of ratting on family, and what are you, a racist?

Caroline Fourest, in *Brother Tariq*, makes the argument that, in the end, the ambiguity in Ramadan's outlook can only serve to confer legitimacy on the revolutionary Islamist idea, which is willy-nilly bound, in turn, to elevate ever so slightly terrorism's prestige. Fourest pictures a young man from North Africa in France, attending a lecture by Ramadan, and she wonders what ideas somebody like that might take away. Hamel, in *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan*, scoffs at Fourest's argument and observes that,

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for all the accusations against Ramadan, nothing has ever been proved, and out of the many thousands of people who have in fact attended his lectures, only a single person, a man from the Lyon district, is known to have ended up in Al Qaeda's Afghan training camps. Who is right in this dispute?

Hamel, the scoffer, would carry the day in a court of law. Still, it is easy to imagine that, in a small way, Fourest may be on to something. And what is Buruma's position on the Fourest-Hamel debate? The author of *Murder in Amsterdam* seems to have missed this particular controversy, which is odd. Theo van Gogh's murderer is precisely the kind of bewildered young man that Fourest has asked us to picture: a second-generation North African immigrant who has had to sort through the doctrines coming his way, looking for the signs of prestige and glamour, trying to estimate which of those many ideas might be deemed to be exceptionally honorable, legitimate, dignified. Even obligatory. Fourest published *Brother Tariq* in 2004. Muhammad Bouyeri murdered van Gogh later that year. Buruma published his book in 2006.

VIII.

Buruma has not missed one other issue, though, and this is the biggest issue of all, though it may seem strange to say so, given how much we hear about anti-Semitism and terrorist violence. This is the question of women's rights. And it is here that Ramadan's dialectical language has proved to be exceptionally flexible, hitting notes that are ancient and modern at the same time—the tones of the Islamic renewal that wishes to return to the salafi past, yet wishes to do so with an eye to modernity and a willingness to innovate. In his conversation with Buruma, Ramadan said in regard to the relation between the sexes: "The body must not be forgotten. Men and women are not the same. In Islamic tradition, women are seen in terms of being mothers, wives, or daughters. Now woman exists as woman." This makes Ramadan sound like a traditionalist, and he certainly is one. Yet the traditions in question here are not the same as folk customs or peasant gowns. Ramadan's phrase "Islamic tradition" in this passage means Islamic law: a religious matter, not a folk habit. But then, since religious law bespeaks the eternal, there is no reason why Ramadan should not seek to express his views in a fully modern language, something up-to-date and readily understandable.

And so Ramadan considers himself to be—it goes without saying—a feminist. Better: an "Islamic feminist," which is a traditional claim in the Muslim Brotherhood. Islam itself, in his description, should be regarded as a force for women's rights. At the time of the Qur'anic revelation, cultural assumptions with regard to women's role in society were extremely primitive, and Islam improved upon them. Islam, or at least his own Islam, requires women to wear headscarves or veils, and this, too, ought to be seen as a step in favor of women's autonomy. The scarves and the veils, the separate entranceways and seating sections, the general ban on intermingling the sexes—these rules of dress and conduct uphold a spirit of sexual modesty, and this modesty removes women from the oppression of male considerations. Modesty is liberation, from this point of view. And all this, Ramadan's argument for the rights of women, emerges finally as part of a larger battle, which he likewise expresses in the modern language of rights. It is the battle for individual liberty, for religious rights, for the right to choose one's path.

His position on the headscarf law in France—the law in 2004 that forbade the wearing of veils or headscarves (and other ostentatious religious symbols) in the public schools—followed this line of reasoning exactly. "Rights are rights," he told Buruma. "And to demand them is a right." On Ramadan's part, this sort of argument has been perfectly consistent. But it is strange—it ought to seem strange, anyway—to see the journalists adopt the same position, and even the same language. Ramadan presents himself as a defender of the rights of Muslim women, and in the *Times* magazine Buruma likewise presents him as a man who "promoted the right of Muslim women to wear the veil at French schools." The description could have been written by Ramadan himself. Once the terms for arguing an issue have been established, there is no getting away from them. And so Stéphanie Giry, Ramadan's reviewer in the *Times* Book Review, looked on Ramadan and the headscarf debate in exactly the same light. Ramadan, in Giry's presentation, opposed the headscarf law on what she described as "classic libertarian grounds—the right of Muslim girls to choose for themselves whether to cover up."

And yet all this ought to be fairly astonishing. A reader could almost imagine from these accounts that, in the French debate over the headscarf law, there were no other ways to present the issue. But there were, in fact, other ways. Some of them were silly, or anti-Muslim, or folklorically French, or a dozen other things, as in any national debate. But there was a serious argument, which emerged in the course of the hearings that were held and might even have produced the overwhelming public approval of the law. The whole controversy over headscarves in the schools is not anything old or traditional in France. The issue arose only beginning in 1989, which is to say, at the moment when the Islamist movement began to take on strength—though, once the issue had arisen, it grew rapidly, until at last the pressure to enact a law became too great to resist. And what was this issue?

The issue, the deep issue, the issue that commanded a genuine respect, was one of equal education for women, and, by extension, equal health care, too: the absolute fundamentals for any possible achievement of rights for women. As the Islamist movement grew in France, Muslim girls and women in the schools increasingly refused to participate in gym class, because of the immodest clothes that sports require; and refused to be alone with male teachers; and refused to be examined or treated by male doctors. The agitation in the immigrant neighborhoods to ban instruction in Voltaire, Darwin, and the crimes of Nazism attracted most of the public attention for a long while; but it may be that these issues were not nearly as fateful as the campaign that now got under way, on the basis of religious objections, to limit the education of girls and women, and to limit their access to health care, too.

The hearings revealed something else. Quite a few Muslim girls and women honestly had no desire to see their educational and healthcare opportunities demurely shrink into something less than the maximum. The girls and the women refused to take gym class and engage in other activities for one reason only: they were under pressure to do so. The pressure sometimes came from their families at home, and other times from the larger Muslim community, in opposition to their own families. The pressure demanded conformity with Islamic precepts, not as determined by the already existing traditions of the Muslim immigrants, nor by the old and official mainline Muslim organization, but by the new Islamists. The headscarf was more than the symbol of this pressure. It was a mechanism of Islamist enforcement. The headscarf was precisely the

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item of clothing that guaranteed that any Muslim girl or woman who dared to venture into the wrong doorway or to take her place in the wrong classroom was going to be instantly visible to everyone who might disapprove.

The question, from this point of view, was not whether Muslim girls and women had the right to wear a headscarf in the schools. The question was whether Muslim girls and women had the right *not* to wear a headscarf. The purpose in proposing a law against wearing headscarves in the schools was not to crush the Muslim religion. Nothing in that law prevented women and girls from donning their headscarves as soon as they left the school building. The purpose was to transform the schools into a zone beyond Islamist control, not out of some ideological whim but in order to preserve and to enforce one of the major achievements of modern society, still not entirely realized, which is full rights and benefits for women.

The battle to secure equal education and health care for women has been going on for a century and a half, and it has always taken the same form, more or less: a battle against obscurantist priests, against reactionary patriarchs and prejudices, against entrenched social customs. The whole controversy ought to be fairly recognizable by now. Nineteenth-century novelists were obsessed by these themes. And yet somehow, in the case of Muslim girls and women in the schools and hospitals not just of France but everywhere in Western Europe (not to mention in the rest of the world), the entire question of women's rights, virtually every aspect of it, has disappeared from a great many journalists' narrative of events. And the dispute has been presented to the public in Ramadan's version: as a matter of rights for Muslims. Or, as Ramadan said to Buruma, without the slightest demurral on Buruma's part: "Rights are rights."

But that is not the half of it. The truly enormous issue in regard to women has always been a question of violence and brutality—the violence of husbands against their wives. The group rapes in the French suburbs (which, having been a problem in the last years, led to the formation of the Muslim feminist movement Ni Putes Ni Soumises, or Neither Whores Nor Submissives—an organization that Ramadan regards as hostile to the Muslim immigrants). The violence of fathers against their daughters, of brothers against their sisters. The genital mutilations of Muslim women (sometimes euphemistically described, by people who have never heard a description, as mere "circumcisions"), which by now are said to have affected thirty thousand women in France alone. The lurking potential, finally, of outright murders: the so-called honor killings of women by their fathers or brothers because of some transgression of the sexual code. Is there any educated person today who has not given a few thoughts to this horrendous issue?

On this question, too, on the issue of violence against women, especially the issue of violence and murder as punishment for sexual transgressions, Ramadan has taken a remarkable public stand—though it may be that he took this stand without much forethought, as something that he blurted out. His position emerged during the course of a debate in 2003 between him and Nicolas Sarkozy (who was then the French interior minister and has just now become president) on the French television program "One Hundred Minutes to Convince." Sarkozy arrived at the program with a debater's trick up his sleeve and, when the moment seemed propitious, came out with it.

This was a question regarding Ramadan's family—in this case, Tariq's older brother Hani, who has always taken more brazen positions than Tariq. The two brothers, Tariq and Hani, have been known to have their differences. Still, the question remained: how great were those differences between the extremist Hani and the moderate Tariq? Sarkozy brought up Hani Ramadan's view of the proper punishment for women who commit adultery. Hani Ramadan has favored stoning these women to death. That is the seventh-century law, and Hani Ramadan has stood behind it.

But what about Tariq Ramadan, Sarkozy asked? What is his own position? Ian Hamel, in *The Truth About Tariq Ramadan*, argues that Ramadan's response, in its frankness, proves that he does not practice a "double discourse" but says what he thinks, without the slightest effort to conceal his views. And maybe so, though you could just as reasonably argue that Sarkozy caught Ramadan off-guard, and he had no time to work up a modern and progressive language to express his religious conviction, and his thoughts came tumbling out in an unpolished version. In any case, Ramadan, in Buruma's account, "replied that he favored a 'moratorium' on such practices but refused to condemn the law outright."

Aziz Zemouri provides a transcript in *Should Tariq Ramadan Be Silenced?*,

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which offers a fine display of the French fondness for the ellipsis as an expressive punctuation:

> Sarkozy: A moratorium.... Mr. Ramadan, are you serious?
> Ramadan: Wait, let me finish.
> Sarkozy: A moratorium, that is to say, we should, for a while, hold back from stoning women?
> Ramadan: No, no, wait....
> What does a moratorium mean? A moratorium would mean that we absolutely end the application of all of those penalties, in order to have a true debate. And my position is that if we arrive at a consensus among Muslims, it will necessarily end. But you cannot, you know, when you are in a community.... Today on television, I can please the French people who are watching by saying, "Me, my own position." But my own position doesn't count. What matters is to bring about an evolution in Muslim mentalities, Mr. Sarkozy. It's necessary that you understand....
> Sarkozy: But, Mr. Ramadan....
> Ramadan: Let me finish.
> Sarkozy: Just one point. I understand you, but Muslims are human beings who live in 2003 in France, since we are speaking about the French community, and you have just said something particularly incredible, which is that the stoning of women, yes, the stoning is a bit shocking, but we should simply declare a moratorium, and then we are going to think about it in order to decide if it is good....
> But that's monstrous—to stone a woman because she is an adulterer! It's necessary to condemn it!
> Ramadan: Mr. Sarkozy, listen well to what I am saying. What I say, my own position, is that the law is not applicable—that's clear. But today, I speak to Muslims around the world and I take part, even in the United States, in the Muslim world.... You should have a pedagogical posture that makes people discuss things. You can decide all by yourself to be a progressive in the communities. That's too easy. Today my position is, that is to say, "We should stop."
> Sarkozy: Mr. Ramadan, if it is regressive not to want to stone women, I avow that I am a regressive.

Some six million French people watched that exchange. A huge number of Muslim immigrants must have been among them—the very people who might have benefited from hearing someone speak with absolute clarity about violence against women. Ramadan couldn't do it. Here was his Qutbian moment, the moment of frisson. The seventh century had suddenly appeared, poking out from beneath the modern rhetoric of feminism and rights. A moment of barbarism. A thrill. The whole panorama of Muslim women suddenly deployed across the television screens of France—the panorama of violence that is condoned, sanctified, and even mandated by the highest authorities. And here was Sarkozy, recoiling in horror: the bourgeoisie, shocked at last.

Even so, Sarkozy had more to say. Ramadan had written yet another preface, this time introducing a book that cites the Qur'anic passage enjoining husbands to beat their wives under certain circumstances—though the book maintained that beatings should merely mean a light slap, without producing a physical wound. "We are grateful for this advice and recommendation," Sarkozy mordantly remarked.

And yet—here is another peculiarity—some people, and not just salafi reformists, convince themselves that Ramadan came out looking pretty good in that exchange. There is the case of Olivier Roy, one of the world's supreme experts on Islam and Muslim culture. In his new book *Globalized Islam*, Roy takes the view that Ramadan's argument on stoning was not merely understandable, for reasons that supreme experts could best appreciate, but was, in absolute terms, positively progressive—a blow for secularism, no less, on the grounds that state and church ought to be separate, and here was Ramadan maintaining the autonomy of his separate sphere, and yet doing so with just the right touch of admirable hypocrisy not to run afoul of secular law. From this point of view, Sarkozy in this debate was the tyrannical oppressor, and Ramadan the progressive—but, oh, never mind the reasoning. The point is: Ramadan did a good thing.

Buruma in the *Times* magazine was a little cagier:

> When I talked with Ramadan in London, the mere mention of the word "stoning" set him off on a long explanation.
> "Personally," he said, "I'm against capital punishment, not only in Muslim countries, but also in the U.S. But when you want to be heard in Muslim countries, when you are addressing religious issues, you can't just say it has to stop. I think it has to stop. But you have to discuss it within the religious context. There are texts involved. I am not just talking to Muslims in Europe, but addressing the implementation of *huddud* everywhere, in Indonesia, Pakistan and the Middle East. And I'm speaking from the inside to Muslims. Speaking as an outsider would be counterproductive."

And Buruma in his article left it at that—for the moment. He appended not one comment of his own, not even a skeptical phrase equivalent to saying, "This may or not be accurate," as he had said in regard to Ramadan's picture of Hassan al-Banna's British-style parliamentarism—though, in this case, the comment would have had to be something like, "This may or may not be civilized."

Still, Buruma did linger over one aspect of Ramadan's argument in his profile, and this was the matter of speaking to Muslims as an insider versus speaking as an outsider. A pragmatic question. Buruma invited his readers to amble with him down Brick Lane in London's East End—the old and traditional immigrant district, which, as he lachrymosely observed, "used to be a poor Jewish area, where refugees from Russian pogroms eked out a living in the Sunday markets, cheap clothing stores and kosher dining halls." Brick Lane's immigrants today are Bangladeshis and Pakistanis. Amid these colorful and touching scenes, Buruma contemplated Ramadan and compared him with another Muslim intellectual. This was Ayaan Hirsi Ali—the Somali woman who, after having undergone many gruesome experiences in Africa and in Saudi Arabia, escaped to a new life of academic study and liberal activism in Holland, making movies and writing books titled, in one case, *Infidel*, and subtitled, in another case, "An Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam."

Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Tariq Ramadan seemed to Buruma rather similar in one respect. "Her mission, too, is to spread universal values. She, too, speaks of reform"—though I have to interrupt these quotations to recall that Buruma's understanding of Ramadan's universal values is based on a philosophical miscomprehension, and his notion of reform in connection to Ramadan reflects a simple factual error. He continued: "But she has renounced her belief in Islam. She says that Islam is backward and perverse. As a result, she has had more success with secular non-

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Muslims than with the kind of people who shop in Brick Lane." But—this was Buruma's implication—that is not the case with Ramadan. His own credibility has remained intact.

In short, Ramadan made the right decision in refusing to condemn the practice of stoning women to death—not for Roy's reason (a principled blow for secularism) but for political reasons: to maintain his viability on streets like Brick Lane. Th is ought to be a familiar argument—it was more or less the argument that Sartre invoked in order to explain why he refused to condemn the Soviet Union. Sartre invited his audiences to think of the industrial suburb of Paris called Billancourt, where the ignorant workers believed in communism and the Soviet future—and he did not want to demoralize the downtrodden, to *désespérer Billancourt*. And so Sartre bit his tongue; if the workers were going to learn the truth about the Soviets, it was not going to be from him. And Ramadan is right not to *désespérer* Brick Lane by offering a simple straight-out condemnation of violence against women.

Needless to say, yet another positive evaluation ran in the *Times* Book Review under Giry's byline. Giry argued that Ramadan's refusal to condemn stoning could be sympathetically regarded as, in her words, "an expression of his view that each society must decide for itself how to put into practice the values of Islam." An argument for self-determination. It is almost comic to notice that Roy, Buruma, and Giry disagree entirely about why Ramadan was right to take the position that he did, but everyone agrees that, whatever the rationale, he was right. To go on television and unambiguously condemn the stoning to death of Muslim women—surely everyone can see how wrong that would have been, especially for any progressive person who cares about secular values, oppression, poverty, and colonialism. Th is is amazing.

There is something more, though, and this has to do with the Muslim intellectual whom Buruma contrasted so unfavorably to the admirable Ramadan—namely, the author of *Infidel* and the "Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam," Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Buruma's criticism of Hirsi Ali in the *Times* magazine did not come out of the blue. A year ago he published an op-ed in the *Times* likewise criticizing Hirsi Ali, though on the slightly broader grounds of fanning the flames of right-wing racism against Muslims. More recently he reviewed *Infidel* for the *Times* Book Review and lit into her yet again with a suggestion that her passionate devotion to exposing the scale of honor killings around the world ought to be likened to Muslim fundamentalism. His most extended criticism appears in *Murder in Amsterdam*, his book about the murder of Hirsi Ali's film-making colleague van Gogh, who was found dead on the street with a knife plunged into his chest, pinning to his body a sheet of paper containing a death threat to Hirsi Ali. In his article in the *Times* magazine, Buruma referred obliquely to this murder and the death threat by noting that "having had her fill of controversies in the Netherlands," Hirsi Ali has not only moved to Washington, D.C., but has taken a job at the American Enterprise Institute—a remarkably serene way of describing these events, neatly packaged with a sly suggestion that Hirsi Ali has sold out to the neocons.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali by Lara Tomlin for The New Republic

At least in *Murder in Amsterdam* Buruma summons an occasional kind word for Hirsi Ali. His book concludes: "Ayaan Hirsi Ali has had to leave the scene. My country seems smaller without her"—which at minimum decently acknowledges that she might have departed Holland for reasons going beyond pique and annoyance. But *Murder in Amsterdam* is mostly filled, in connection to Hirsi Ali, with one argument or insult after another, accusing her of being a fanatic, of entertaining intellectual arguments that are substantially no different from those of van Gogh's murderer ("two fundamentalisms"), of retaining the zealousness of the Muslim Brotherhood in her own arguments against the principles of the Muslim Brotherhood, of exaggerating the dangers facing her, of being strident and arrogant, of being an aristocratic snob ("It was this wave, this gentle gesture of disdain, this almost aristocratic dismissal of a noisome inferior, that upset her critics more than anything"), and so on: pages written with an unmistakable flash of anger, relative to Buruma's normally phlegmatic manner.

The chapters in Hirsi Ali's *The Caged Virgin*—the book with the subtitle about the "Emancipation Proclamation"—carry such titles as "Genital Mutilation Must Not be Tolerated," "How to Deal With Domestic Violence More Effectively," and "Standing Up for Your Rights!" And yet one of the chapters is titled "Let Us Have a Voltaire"—and this was too much for Buruma. He wrote: "Ayaan Hirsi Ali was no Voltaire. For Voltaire had flung his insults at the Catholic Church, one of the two most powerful institutions of eighteenth-century France, while Ayaan risked offending only a minority that was already feeling vulnerable in the heart of Europe." Voltaire was brave—but Hirsi Ali? She is a bully.

Why has Buruma done this, and at such length, too, and repeatedly—three articles condemning Hirsi Ali in *Th e New York Times* alone, apart from his book? His main ostensible complaint, as expressed in the *Times* magazine, seems absurdly tiny. He remarks that, because of her Voltairean insults at Islam, she has frittered away any chance she might have had to make friends and influence people on streets like Brick Lane. Is this true? I wonder if bookish young Muslim women in the immigrant zones of Europe aren't sneaking a few glances at Hirsi Ali's writings and making brave resolutions for themselves. Anne Applebaum contemplated this possibility in *Th e Washington Post* in the course of noting what a large campaign has been gotten up against Hirsi Ali. In Holland, the novelist Margriet

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de Moor, in her own contribution to the recent debate over Buruma's journalism, has insisted that in fact Hirsi Ali has been tremendously effective in speaking to Muslim women. "And it was claimed that she did not reach her target group?" De Moor thought otherwise: "Secretly, though, all of them swallowed what she said, their ears burning." Ramadan himself has ruefully observed that the overwhelming majority of European Muslims are far from devout—though it should be added that in many places the devout minority have intimidated the majority.

Still, everyone can grant that Hirsi Ali, in taking her Voltairean stand against Islam, has put herself in a less than ideal position for addressing the devout minority, and everyone who has come under their influence. But why this should arouse Buruma's animosity is hard to know. Salman Rushdie has not endeared himself either in some neighborhoods—which is not a count against him, given that, normally speaking, novelists in our modern day have no reason at all to pander to the religious reactionaries. Hirsi Ali is a tractarian and a memoirist, and it is not obvious why the rules for her should be any different. Her entire purpose in fleeing to the Netherlands, as she has explained eloquently and at length, was to escape a life of submitting to other people's reactionary opinions and to go bang the table on behalf of individual freedom, and here she is doing what she has intended to do. Why the attacks, then?

If you open either of her books and read a few lines at random, you will discover one reality that you would hardly guess from reading those attacks. Buruma—and he is not the only one to do this—presents Hirsi Ali as a diehard enemy of Islam, dedicated to hurling insults, which, to be sure, she does do, and with gusto. But this is not her major theme. In her books, and in the little film that she made with van Gogh, she dedicates herself mostly to something else, and that is to describe and to decry the miseries of women in the portion of the Muslim world that she knows best—in East Africa and Saudi Arabia, together with the immigrant zones of Europe. Her account of her own genital mutilation as a little girl, and of the botched genital mutilation of her sister, and the sister's tragic life and suicide; her portrait of girlhood and marriage in Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia, not to mention her own forced marriage, which she fled; the portrait of her grandmother, the Somali nomad, and the patriarchal customs of the past, which do seem to have lingered on; her sense of horror, as a girl, at seeing the women of Saudi Arabia for the first time, these women who have no faces because of their veils and whose black garments hang so shapelessly upon their bodies that, in order to know which way the women are facing, you have to look to see which way their shoes are pointing; her account of the shelters for abused Muslim women in Holland; her account of the terrors of refugee existence, and the double terrors of refugee existence for women—all these passages express something that can never be detected in a certain kind of high-minded cerebral journalism today. It is a visceral anger at oppression. A moral indignation, and not just a wistful pragmatism.

But mostly these passages in Hirsi Ali's books raise the issue of women's rights, and not from an outsider's point of view, regardless of how many times she has been denounced for making herself an outsider to Muslim life. Hers is a story marked by knives—the knife at her own genital mutilation, and at her sister's; the knife at the murder of her friend and colleague, pinning to his chest the sheet of paper threatening her own life. This is not a Swiss professor! Here is the actual insider; the real thing. I suppose that all this unironic indignation can only be annoying in the extreme to a certain kind of refined sensibility. Something about those knives takes away the quality of abstraction that allows a social issue to be shrugged off. It is always good to be subtle and nuanced, but Hirsi Ali's writings have the effect of making a large number of nuanced subtleties look ridiculous.

About Hirsi Ali we do not have to wonder: where does she stand on the question of stoning women to death? Or on the obligation for husbands to beat their wives? Read one page by her and you will know the answer; and if you read two pages, you might begin to suspect that, on the television screens of France, the man who defended the oppressed of the oppressed in the poorest neighborhoods of Europe was Nicolas Sarkozy. But that has got to be the problem from a perspective like Buruma's. This talk of women's rights—doesn't it point ultimately in directions that ought to be regarded as (here is the mystery of our present moment) conservative? Better the seventh century than Nicolas Sarkozy.

If there is an intellectual establishment, and I suppose there is, the attacks on Hirsi Ali radiate from its center. And this, the campaign against Hirsi Ali—this, like the anti-Semitic mob assault during the Paris peace march of 2003, or like the spectacle of millions of Britons marching under the leadership of an Islamist organization, or like the calm discussions in *The New York Times* of why it would be wrong to condemn with any vigor the stoning of women to death—this does represent something new. Here is the new development among journalists and intellectuals, the development that Ramadan's career has served to illuminate. Something like a campaign against Hirsi Ali could never have taken place a few years ago. A sustained attack on an authentic liberal dissident crying out against injustices in remote parts of the world and even in the back streets of Western Europe, a sustained attack that appears nearly to have erased the very mention of women's oppression and the struggle for women's rights from discussion—no, this could not have happened yesterday, except on the extreme right. This is a new event. This is a reactionary turn in the intellectual world.

IX.

The reactionary turn has aroused a response, however, and this has been fascinating to see. A fairly large controversy over Buruma's journalism has broken out in Europe during the last few months, originally in an online English-language journal in Germany with the slightly punny name of signandsight.com (the pun being on Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, though what Heidegger has to do with this is beyond me); and from the cloudy zones of cyberspace the controversy has precipitated by now onto the feuilleton pages of paper-and-ink newspapers in Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland, and France. A first book adverting to the scandal has already appeared in Germany, *Welche Freiheit: Plädoyers für eine offene Gesellschaft*, or *Which Freedom: Arguments for an Open Society*, an anthology edited by Ulrike Ackermann (to which Buruma himself has contributed an adaptation from *Murder in Amsterdam*). A second book is on its way.

The controversy was inaugurated by Pascal Bruckner, the French writer, and

TOMASZ WALENTA

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this was entirely in keeping with his own work over the years. The group of French intellectuals known as the New Philosophers are famous for having launched a criticism of communism, and of totalitarian doctrines as a whole, some three decades ago—actually, a mortal blow to communist and pro-communist ideas in Europe. But Bruckner's contribution to this literature veered in a slightly different direction. He wrote a criticism of the leftist doctrine that in those days was still known as "Third Worldism"—meaning the hope and the expectation that, around the world, the impoverished countries, the former colonies and semi-colonies, would generate, as an aspect of their struggle against Western imperialism, a worldwide revolutionary alternative, a soulful new kind of socialism, a new and revolutionary culture. This was the doctrine that venerated revolutionary leaders such as Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Fidel Castro not because they were communists but because they were the leaders of the Third World revolution.

But Bruckner, in writing about the "Third Worldist" idea, noticed that among the good-hearted leftists of the Western countries, sympathy for oppressed people in the former colonies had turned into a kind of dehumanizing contempt for the oppressed people in the former colonies, without anyone having noticed. He called his book *The Tears of the White Man*, and in its pages he served up a spectacular exposé of left-wing European clichés about the poor and the oppressed in faraway places—an enormous catalogue of Noble Savage imagery and other fantastical pictures of the superior qualities of downtrodden people in poor countries, compared with their former oppressors in Europe. The book was a demonstration of how, through a combination of guilty consciences and patronizing ignorance, the European intellectuals had ended up re-creating the worst sorts of racist and colonialist imaginings of what people in other places and with other skin tones must be like: their wisdom, virtue, selflessness, brilliance, and, above all, their profound quality of being different.

Bruckner has returned to this topic from time to time over the years, and just last year he came out with a sequel called *La Tyrannie de la Pénitence*, or *The Tyranny of Penitence*, updated to our own age, in which the "Third World" of yore has been renamed the "south," and the imperialists have been renamed the forces of globalization. And the sequel has led Bruckner to take a new glance at how, in our own time, the progressive intellectuals of the Western countries, out of a continuing self-contempt and feeling of guilt for the Western crimes of the past, have likewise updated their fantasies about the wronged and inscrutable people of other regions without really changing them. Ian Buruma, because of his sundry books, was the ideal person for *The New York Times Magazine* to assign a profile on Tariq Ramadan; and Pascal Bruckner, because of his own books, has turned out to be the ideal person to write about Ian Buruma. Bruckner noted the peculiarities of Buruma's campaign against Hirsi Ali. He took note of Timothy Garton Ash's contribution to this campaign in *The New York Review of Books*. And Bruckner offered a philosophical analysis.

Buruma and Garton Ash, Bruckner concluded, had fallen for the intellectual miasmas of the postmodern sensibility, and the miasmas had led, via the errors of relativism and an indiscriminate multiculturalism, to the simplest of philosophical mistakes. This was the inability to draw even the most elementary of distinctions. In the postmodern idea, the Enlightenment has come to be looked upon as merely one more set of cultural prejudices, no better and very likely rather worse than other sets of cultural prejudices—a zealotry that is unable to control its own excesses. From this point of view, someone like Hirsi Ali, who grew up in an atmosphere of Islamist radicalism and the Muslim Brotherhood in Africa and has taken up a new outlook committed to rationalism and individual freedom, has merely gone from one fundamentalism to another—not much different, seen in this light, from van Gogh's murderer.

But this means only that Hirsi Ali's critics have lost the ability to distinguish between a fanatical murderer and a rational debater. Here is "the racism of the anti-racists," in Bruckner's phrase. It is the racism that, while pretending to stand up for the oppressed, would deny to someone from Africa the right to make use of the same Enlightenment tools of analysis that Europeans are welcome to use. Bruckner took note of the nasty personal tone with which Hirsi Ali had been discussed—the masculine condescension, to mention one aspect, which scarcely anybody could have missed in Garton Ash's *New York Review* essay, where he suggested that Hirsi Ali's literary success must be owed significantly to her looks.

"It is astonishing," Bruckner wrote, "that 62 years after the fall of the Third Reich and 16 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an important segment of Europe's intelligentsia is engaged in slandering the friends of democracy." This was not a gentle criticism. Then again, Bruckner was hardly alone in making these points. It must have been depressing for Buruma to see both the Turkish writer Necla Kelek and Bassam Tibi weigh in with their own ferocious criticisms. Kelek saw in Buruma's writings a new set of stereotypes about Muslims that had prevented him from being able to notice a series of dangers—for instance, the increasing problem in Europe of Muslim men preventing their own women from receiving medical care from male physicians. Tibi, without being much of a fan of Hirsi Ali, was indignant that Buruma could not tell the difference between Islam and Islamism, between the religion and the totalitarian ideology. Tibi was indignant that Buruma had conceded to Tariq Ramadan the right to speak for Islam; and indignant that Buruma could not see the virtue of a genuinely new kind of Europeanized Islam, which can hardly be salafi.

Then again, it was surprising to see how much difficulty Buruma and Garton Ash had in mustering a proper response to these criticisms—not that anyone suffered an inability to summon forth minor phraseologies and harrumphs. Garton Ash was not at his best. The first of his responses to Bruckner began, "Pascal Bruckner is the intellectual equivalent of a drunk meandering down the road," and proceeded from there, chiefly for the purpose of trying to demonstrate that Bruckner, in his inebriation, had failed to identify any sort of problem at all. Garton Ash's second intervention meandered a little further down the road. He came under criticism in Germany from Ulrike Ackermann, and this must have been, for him, less than pleasant. Garton Ash, years ago, was a hero of the anti-communist dissident movement in the East Bloc. Certainly he was a hero for many of us who read him in the Western countries—a journalist who, with a dramatic flair, brought to life the struggles that were going on throughout the East Bloc in the last years of communist rule. He was an unimpeachable authority on the nature and the necessity of dissidence.

But Ackermann was also, in those years, a hero of the dissident movement. She defended the Czech partisans of Charter 77, which marked one of the early and most important stages of the East Bloc dissident movement, at a time when hardly anyone in her own

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West Germany or elsewhere in the West was paying attention. And, for her troubles, she was arrested by the communist authorities in Prague and jailed for six weeks, and was lucky not to have served a longer sentence. From Ackermann's perspective, Hirsi Ali was the true heir of the East Bloc dissidents of the past—and Garton Ash had turned himself into the kind of person who, in the past, out of a failure to appreciate the achievements of liberal democracy in the West, never did want to see communism collapse. "Precisely because of his support for the Central European dissidents—which I am very familiar with—I find it astonishing that Timothy Garton Ash has clearly become a fellow traveler of Tariq Ramadan," Ackermann wrote.

Garton Ash replied in the *Guardian*. He heaped still more criticism on Hirsi Ali. He was indefatigable. He had lately spent a little while in Egypt, and he wished to explain that other dissidents and intellectuals in the Muslim world were infinitely preferable to the feminist Voltairean. He even came up with a first-rate example. This turned out to be Tariq Ramadan's great-uncle Gamal al-Banna, age eighty-six, the younger brother of Hassan al-Banna. Perhaps it was not surprising that Garton Ash would find himself in the company of Ramadan's great-uncle. Garton Ash was Ramadan's colleague at St. Antony's College at Oxford, and Garton Ash had already expressed his approval of Ramadan in *The New York Review of Books* in the course of his encomia to the brilliant journalism of Ian Buruma, and, whatever the route may have been, the path from St. Antony's to Ramadan's great-uncle in Cairo must not have been a difficult one to tread.

In the *Guardian*, Garton Ash described al-Banna's apartment. He was awed by the mass of religious texts filling the space: a true indication, he meant to suggest, of Sheik al-Banna's erudition. Garton Ash contrasted the sheik's knowledge to Hirsi Ali's pitiful ignorance. Garton Ash quoted one of Hirsi Ali's critical comments on Islam, and he quoted a statement by Sheik al-Banna, and, comparing the two quotations, he was beside himself with indignation at the inferiority of Hirsi Ali's. About those two quoted statements, Garton Ash asked the readers of the *Guardian*, "Which do you think reveals a deeper historical knowledge of Islam? Which is more likely to encourage thoughtful Muslims in the view that they can be both good Muslims and good citizens of free societies?" Garton Ash seems to have felt that finally he had unmasked the pretensions of Hirsi Ali.

Only, a pity! And more than a pity! On the very day that Garton Ash's favorable comparison of Gamal al-Banna with Ayaan Hirsi Ali ran in the *Guardian*, the Middle East Media Research Institute, known as MEMRI, issued its own report on Gamal al-Banna, and the MEMRI report put Sheik al-Banna in a rather less flattering light. This was chiefly because of Sheik al-Banna's praise—it is terrible to have to report these things—for the September 11 attackers and, in al-Banna's words, their "extremely courageous" action, which was "dreadful and splendid," in opposition to the "barbaric capitalism" of the United States. Nor was this the whole of it. Sheik al-Banna expressed a few thoughts in support of suicide terror among the Palestinians, too. He had been on television expressing these ideas; his opinions were not a secret. You might argue that Garton Ash's error in selecting Sheik al-Banna as a model dissident was understandable, and the error was doubtless caused (I am surmising) by the urgent need to come up with the name of somebody, anybody at all, who could be used to take one more swat at the author of the "Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam." Yet there is something uncanny, almost creepy, about how often the journalism on these themes has led Ayaan Hirsi Ali's critics and Tariq Ramadan's defenders into the zones of the grand theoreticians of suicide terror.

Buruma's responses to the several criticisms of his work in Europe were not as calamitous as Garton Ash's, and yet he too could not get himself to see or to acknowledge that Bruckner and the other writers might possibly be on to something. Buruma could not even recognize why anybody would suppose that he, the affable author of *Murder in Amsterdam*, had launched a prolonged, inexplicable, and reactionary campaign against arguably the best-known liberal champion of women's rights ever to come out of Africa. Buruma wrote, "If Mr. Bruckner has been kind enough to read my book, I'm not sure how he came to the conclusion that it was an attack on Ayaan Hirsi Ali." And he went on: "I admire Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and agree with most of what she stands for." Of course he does! This is precisely what he said about Ramadan: "We agreed on most issues."

Something is disturbing in all this agreeableness. At least Buruma might have worked up the courage to acknowledge that some people do seem to regard his attacks as attacks, which have left an impression that if anyone from a Muslim background is right now responsible for whipping up dangerous moods in Europe, that person must be Hirsi Ali. He might have had the courage to assume responsibility for what he wrote about Ramadan in the *Times* magazine, as well, the anointing of Ramadan as the interlocutor for dialogue between the West and Islam—"a laudatory portrait," in Bruckner's dismissive phrase, that "borders on hagiography, despite minor reservations."

Cave

Your TV keeps telling you about the killers in their caves, so write down *cave*;
hold yourself away from yourself and live here only in this word you call *cave*.

Find first a hollow place or perhaps only a hollowness, guarded
and listening: what can you hear in this shell, in this *cavum*?

Empty yet for rigor's sake, allow the word to bloom:
She lifted the cave of her face and told him the truth.

You keep hearing about their caves, so assemble their caves,
where inside they turn their bodies away, shielding their faces.

You want them for nothing; you want them for meat hanging cold in a cave—
though then you would not watch; you would guard your soft face.

So what now can you offer from your room that must remain here a cave?
Her words fell around him like stones, but he gathered up their caved

faces and pierced the words with wire. And when her neck-hollow
bloomed with his coil of stones, a cave above them opened

and spilled out a rain of dark faces: Make us hold open
our mouths; make us live for one moment unguarded, un-hollowed.

JEFF HOFFMAN

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But I see that, in recounting these disputes, I have, by the logic of my own narrative, ended up trotting out the dread word "courage." This may be the heart of the matter. Bruckner seemed to think so: "A culture of courage is perhaps what is most lacking among today's directors of conscience." This sort of remark is not Buruma's cup of tea. The word "courage" leads him into thoughts of fascism. In reply to Bruckner's call for a bit of courage, Buruma tut-tutted, "Now where have we heard that kind of thing before? The need to defend Europe against alien threats; the fatigued, self-doubting, weak-kneed intellectuals…." Buruma wanted his readers to recognize the fascist rhetoric of Europe from seventy years ago, the kinds of phrases that used to pour from the mouths of Nazi intellectuals. Yet something seems to have eluded him. In his own book *Murder in Amsterdam*, the narrative of events requires him to describe sharing a harrowing car trip with Hirsi Ali in the Netherlands, rolling along the streets in an armored car with bodyguards nervously making contingency plans, in case of an assassination attempt against her. The worst thing that Hirsi Ali has done, to judge from *Murder in Amsterdam*, was to engage in a televised discussion with women in a Muslim women's shelter in Amsterdam, where Hirsi Ali came off looking like a snob. Yet maybe it is worth focusing instead on the ghastly fact that, by Buruma's own account, most of the women engaged in that televised discussion wore disguises over their faces, for fear of what might happen to them; and, soon enough, Hirsi Ali herself was forced to take refuge in women's shelters, for fear of being murdered.

When I met Hirsi Ali at a conference in Sweden last year, she was protected by no less than five bodyguards. Even in the United States she is protected by bodyguards. But this is no longer unusual. Buruma himself mentions in *Murder in Amsterdam* that the Dutch Social Democratic politician Ahmed Aboutaleb requires full-time bodyguards. At that same Swedish conference I happened to meet the British writer of immigrant background who has been obliged to adopt the pseudonym Ibn Warraq, out of fear that, in his case because of his Bertrand Russell–influenced philosophical convictions, he might be singled out for assassination. I happened to attend a different conference in Italy a few days earlier and met the very brave Egyptian-Italian journalist Magdi Allam, who writes scathing criticisms of the new totalitarian wave in *Il Corriere della Sera*—and I discovered that Allam, too, was traveling with a full complement of five bodyguards. The Italian journalist Fiamma Nierenstein, because of her well-known sympathies for Israel, was accompanied by her own bodyguards. Caroline Fourest, the author of the most important extended criticism of Ramadan, had to go under police protection for a while. The French philosophy professor Robert Redeker has had to go into hiding. I have no idea what security precautions have been taken by Flemming Rose, the cultural editor of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, which published the Muhammad cartoons. And van Gogh….

So Salman Rushdie has metastasized into an entire social class, a subset of the European intelligentsia—its Muslim wing especially—who survive only because of their bodyguards and their own precautions. This is unprecedented in Western Europe during the last sixty years. And yet if someone like Pascal Bruckner mumbles a few words about the need for courage under these circumstances, the sneers begin—"Now where have we heard that kind of thing before?"—and onward to the litany about fascism. In the *Times* magazine, Buruma held back even from hinting obliquely about the fascist influences on Ramadan's grandfather, the founder of the modern cult of artistic death. Yet Bruckner, the liberal—here is somebody on the brink of fascism!

And this, too, is something new. Eighteen years ago, when Rushdie came under threat, and one of his translators was killed and another was knifed and a couple of Norwegian bookstores were bombed and a British hotel was attacked by a suicide bomber, not to mention the more than fifty people killed in anti-Rushdie rioting around the world—at that terrible moment, when the dangers were obvious, a good many intellectuals in Western countries, people without any sort of Arab or Muslim background, rallied instinctively in Rushdie's defense. A good many reached out to their endangered Arab and Muslim counterparts and colleagues, and celebrated the courage of everyone who declined to be intimidated. My glance happens to rest just now on a dusty volume on my bookshelf, brought out in the course of the Rushdie affair, in 1993, by the French publishing house La Découverte, which contains statements of support for Rushdie by a solid one hundred Arab and Muslim intellectuals: a moving display of fraternal solidarity by the publisher and the contributors both. Leafing through, I stumble on the contribution of Orhan Pamuk, who nowadays goes about with his own detail of bodyguards, though in his case the danger comes from Turkish nationalists, not from Islamists. And here is the contribution of Antoine Sfeir, the Lebanese historian who criticized Tariq Ramadan some years ago in France and found himself facing a lawsuit (which, at least, he won).

Sfeir, in his 1993 essay, recalled that in Egypt the intellectual Farag Foda had recently been assassinated, and Naguib Mahfouz had been brutally assaulted, as part of the same wave of Islamist violence that was threatening Rushdie and his associates. Sfeir declared, "We will never say it enough: to attack the Islamists, to denounce their actions and their lies, is not to attack Islam. To attack the Islamists is, on the contrary, to defend the Muslims themselves, the first though not the only victims of the Islamists." How times have changed! The Rushdies of today find themselves under criticism, compared unfavorably in the press with the Islamist philosopher who writes prefaces for the collected fatwas of Sheik al-Qaradawi, the theologian of the human bomb. Today the menace to society is declared to be Hirsi Ali and people of similar minds, of whom there are quite a few: John Stuart Mill's Muslim admirers, who are said to be just as fanatical as the fanatics. During the Rushdie affair, courage was saluted. Today it is likened to fascism.

How did this happen? The equanimity on the part of some well-known intellectuals and journalists in the face of Islamist death threats so numerous as to constitute a campaign; the equanimity in regard to stoning women to death; the journalistic inability even to acknowledge that women's rights have been at stake in the debates over Islamism; the inability to recall the problems faced by Muslim women in European hospitals; the inability to acknowledge how large has been the role of a revived anti-Semitism; the striking number of errors of understanding and even of fact that have entered into the journalistic presentations of Tariq Ramadan and his ideas; the refusal to discuss with any frankness the role of Ramadan's family over the years; the accidental endorsement in the *Guardian* of the great-uncle who finds something admirable in the September 11 attacks—what can possibly account for this string of bumbles, timidities, gaffes, omissions, miscomprehensions, and slanders?

Two developments account for it. The first development is the unimaginable rise of Islamism since the time of the Rushdie fatwa. The second is terrorism. ◆

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Porn with a Silver Spoon

It's been well-documented in *New York Times* trend stories that our nation has been swamped by a black tide of raunch. The perversion of innocence is sweeping through our schools ("friends, friends with benefits, and the benefits of the local mall"), our placid exurbs ("no longer taboo, pole dancing catches on in book club country"), even tainting our most scrubbed holidays ("good girls go bad, for a day," on skanky Halloween costumes). Well, the editors of the Style section are right: We *are* awash in raunch culture. As a matter of fact, the waters have even begun to rise around such bastions of moral cleanliness as The New Republic—or at least, this one editor.

Last February, I was an extra in an erotic film called *The Fold*, directed by my friend Matt Lambert. This may come as a surprise to people (like my parents) who know me as a modest lady editor from good New England stock. I should assure you off the bat that I behaved with total propriety at all times and removed no articles of clothing. Actually (to make clear how truly chaste, how entirely sex-free, in fact, my role was), I was playing a journalist.

The Fold, written by Matt and his friends Ray Sawhill and Polly Frost, is a funny series of episodic shorts about Internet role-playing games, time travel, civil liberties, and Joan of Arc. It's also about Swedish girls in hot tubs, worldwide orgasm epidemics, and transcentury sex. One sequence involves vaginal origami, which Matt's talented set designer fashioned out of pink origami paper and some Vaseline. In another, a character gets soaked in a "blanket of cum" (hand lotion and a flour-water solution). Vaginal origami and cum blankets notwithstanding, *The Fold* isn't itself classifiable as porn since the sex scenes are simulated and the nudity is limited (albeit enthusiastic); but the film bears an aesthetic resemblance to alt-porn, a new hipster genre chronicled, of course, by the *Times* in 2005 ("wearing nothing but attitude"). And, as such, it represents a very timely shift in the way erotica is getting made. As the *Times* bemoans the smuttification of upper-middle-class life, the smut itself is becoming more upper-middle-class: urbane, ironic, self-aware, and intellectually as well as sexually titillating.

The scene I graced was actually one of the tamer ones in *The Fold* (secretly, I was hoping to be cast in the hot tub scene—but no such luck). Along with about 20 other people, I played an anonymous colleague of Rachel Campanello (a feisty beat reporter for *Gaming Babes* magazine) at a press conference convened by evil corporate CEO Avery Ferguson to announce his eponymous company's production of a time-travel machine. Following this scene was another in which Stephanie Blommaert, a scheming Ferguson exec, coaxes Jack Fisher, the company's v.p. and a secret panty fetishist, into resigning by teasing him with her underwear. The assistant director sent out a call sheet earlier in the week that listed the props for the day's shoot, including: "podium, podium mic, 15 press passes, … 2 water pitchers, plastic cups, 2 long tables, 5 voice recorders, 25 chairs, Ferguson Corp. sign, dirty panties, resignation form."

I dressed up that morning as journalistically as I could, in the skirt suit I've worn exactly once in my professional life. Other than the clothing, it turns out that playing a journalist in a smutty film is very much like being a journalist in real life—i.e., you spend a lot of time standing around, and there's some free food. I milled with the other extras in a classroom on the Upper East Side campus of Hunter College, drinking orange juice and eating bagels, and we shopped identities—I decided I was a divorced *Financial Times* reporter with two children at home, grouchy from running between soccer practice, PTA meetings, and dull pressers like this one.

The imaginary pressers may have been dull, but the actual presser was anything but. Our big moment came halfway through, when Avery Ferguson's son Cody storms in to inform him that the time-travel machine isn't ready and the script calls for "media pandemonium." We extras loved performing pandemonium. One guy in the front row flung his notebook to the ground each time with an increasingly exasperated hiss, then picked it up again for the next take. As an actual journalist, I felt like I should be able to come up with a more realistic response. But most of the journalists I know would have been too busy taking notes to respond at all. So I kept myself to a faintly disapproving "tsk tsk" and head shake.

Later in the day, I met the actor playing panty-addled Jack Fisher. He introduced himself as Porno Jim, a connoisseur, critic, and producer of alt-porn. When I talked to Porno Jim later on the phone, he told me that we were at the beginning of an Internet-enabled renaissance in independent porn—porn made, as he said, with a purpose that's "a little more than just the showing of people who are naked having sex." *The Fold*, while not itself porn, is an example of the direction erotica could go in if more ambitious, creative people get involved. The scene with the cum blanket, for example, which exaggerates the traditional cum shot to the point of subversive absurdity, represents the sort of genre-bucking experimentation Jim sees as critical to the alt-porn movement: "The best thing you can do [with porn convention] is look at it and take it apart and put it back together in another way."

Susan Sontag wrote in 1966 that pornography is "something one is for or against," in the way one is "for or against legalized abortion or federal aid to parochial schools." If this is true, I'm probably "for" pornography in the way I'm for legalized abortion—with some private qualms (for instance, I'm not altogether convinced that alt-porn, despite its lofty goals, doesn't end up replicating the misogyny inherent in its forebears). But the experience of being in *The Fold* does give one hope for a third way and perhaps even an antidote to all the panic over the spreading of raunch culture—light-hearted erotic art without too much to prove. It's smut, in other words, that even a lady editor can enjoy.

Britt Peterson

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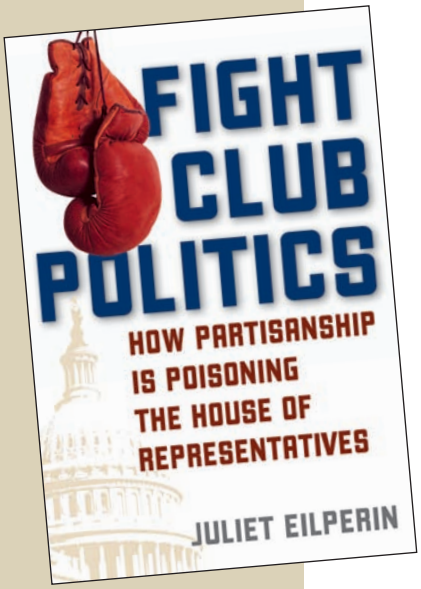

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